They Repair Us

by
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February 6, 2012

Titlecard: Seattle. Four months ago...

EXT. DECK / THE CATCH - TWILIGHT

At the edge of an inlet stands the wooden deck of a restaurant where all of the tables are positioned at discrete distances from each other and occupied by well-dressed PATRONS in their thirties, forties and fifties who enjoy cedar plank fish, complicated salads and dinner rolls that are studded with seeds and herbs.

Seated by himself at the northwest corner table and perusing a menu that is affixed by gold thumbtacks to a slender piece of wood is ALAIN BERTRAND, a forty-six-year-old black man with a shaved head, sharp eyes, a narrow nose and a tan suit. Twilight glares upon his shoulders and the yellow legal notepad that lies beside his left elbow.

A twenty-eight-year-old ASIAN WAITRESS, dressed in a salmon-colored shirt, a dark brown tie and matching slacks, opens the glass door that separates the interior and exterior portions of the restaurant and motions toward Bertrand. Through the portal walks EMMETT, a tall blonde fellow with sunglasses on his boyish face, broad shoulders and expensive black clothes. He sees the indicated man and continues forward, extending his right arm like the prow of a ship.

EMMETT
Mr. Bertrand? Emmett Fields.

Bertrand rises and shakes Emmett's hand.

BERTRAND
Please sit-

The black man motions to a wooden chair, and the blonde fellow withdraws it from the table.

EMMETT
I'm sorry I'm late.
(he sits)
Have you been here long?

BERTRAND
I arrived at six.

As Bertrand sits, Emmett glances at his watch, which shows that the time is six twenty-three.

EMMETT
Sorry. I would've called you if I had your cell.

BERTRAND
I don't own a cellular phone. Would you please remove your sunglasses?

EMMETT
Sure. But I'm handsomer this way. If handsomer's a word.

BERTRAND
I don't like to talk to people who have their eyes covered.

The blonde man peels off his glasses, revealing two blue eyes that are surrounded by worry lines and bags at odds with the rest of his youthful face.

EMMETT
Why don't you have a cellphone? Head cancer? Married?

BERTRAND
I don't want to be tethered.

EMMETT
You can always do this-

Emmett withdraws his cellphone, thumbs the screen to life, TAPS the 'Power' button and returns the device to his pocket.

BERTRAND
Are you still married?

EMMETT
I am.

BERTRAND
If your wife called right now, she would leave a message?

EMMETT
Yes.

BERTRAND
And how long do you have to respond before the quality of her life is negatively affected? An hour? Two hours?

EMMETT
My wife isn't a nag. Actually, she's pretty wonderful, especially considering...

Something sad shines in the blonde man's eyes.

BERTRAND
My comment has nothing to do with her nor the quality of your marriage, but rather the set of expectations that are created by that device.

A shadow slides between the men, and they look up. Beside the table stands the Asian Waitress.

ASIAN WAITRESS
Would you like something from the bar?

Emmett glances at Bertrand.

EMMETT
Are you gonna hold it against me if I order something significant?

BERTRAND
I'm not a puritan.

The blonde fellow returns his attention to the waitress.

EMMETT
I'd like a martini-- filthy with five.

The woman nods her head and looks at the other diner.

BERTRAND
Mineral water.

ASIAN WAITRESS
I'll be back with your drinks in a minute. Let me know when you'd like to hear about our specials.

The Asian Waitress departs, and Emmett, after briefly appraising her figure, returns his attention to Bertrand.

EMMETT
So what happens if there's an emergency? If somebody needs to talk to you right away?

BERTRAND
How many life or death calls have you received on your cellphone? Somebody hanging on the edge of a cliff or stuck in a burning building with only your number and enough power for one call? In which case, nine-one-one is a better choice.

EMMETT
It doesn't have to be life or death.

BERTRAND
That's how I define the term, 'emergency.' Otherwise, what you're talking about is largely the result of bad planning, forgetfulness and inconsiderate behavior.

A martini with five olives lands on the table, followed by an empty glass into which the waitress pours mineral water.

EMMETT
Sorry about being late.

Bertrand grins.

BERTRAND
Don't worry about it.
(to the waitress)
Thank you.

After a courteous nod, the woman departs.

EMMETT
And if your wife wants to hear you say I love you?

BERTRAND
She should hear it directly from me rather than from a buzzing piece of plastic.

EMMETT
Is your organization against technology? Like the Amish and the Luddites and those special Jews on Saturday?
(he sips)
Maybe everyone with a big beard.

BERTRAND
We don't have any dogma.

EMMETT
Leonard didn't tell me much-- he just said I should meet you-- that you helped him. So...you aren't a cult like Scientology or something?

BERTRAND
I wouldn't classify Scientology as a cult, since I think that's a derogatory term, and the beliefs of Scientology are as credible as those of Christianity. One was created by a science fiction author, and the other revolves around the magical conception and resurrection of a man who never existed.

Emmett chews and swallows an olive.

EMMETT
I thought Jesus was a real guy, whether you believe in the God aspect or not.

BERTRAND
Jesus was created about forty years after his fictional death.
(he drinks water)
But believe what you like--
Christians, as well as Jews, Buddhists, Scientologists and Muslims have received our treatment.

EMMETT
How does it work?

BERTRAND
We provide people with a tool that helps them overcome their obstacles.

Emmett drinks from his martini and sets it down. His hands tremble, and he clasps them together.

Bertrand sees the other man's unease and writes a tiny and precise comment upon his notepad.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
When did you experience your loss?

EMMETT
You didn't do a background check?

BERTRAND
I'm doing that now.

EMMETT
About a year ago.

BERTRAND
Was your child a boy or a girl?

EMMETT
A girl. Five years old.

BERTRAND
How much time do you spend thinking about her each day?

Tears shine in Emmett's eyes, and he nods his head.

EMMETT
(quietly)
A lot.
(he clears his throat)
Will the treatment affect my memories?

BERTRAND
The treatment will not affect your memories.

EMMETT
Good.

BERTRAND
Is group therapy helping?

EMMETT
Some.
(he shrugs)
Well...not really. Which is surprising, since I thought sitting in a room full of traumatized people would make me feel awesome. Though that's where I met Leonard.
(he looks up)
Do you know him?

BERTRAND
I do. Did he discuss the fee and the manner in which it must be conveyed?

EMMETT
That won't be an issue.

BERTRAND
Are you interested in involving your wife at this time?

EMMETT
I want see if it works.

BERTRAND
That is understandable.

Emmett finishes his martini, chews two olives and looks over his shoulder.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
Inside and on the left.

EMMETT
Thanks. Be back in a minute.

INT. BATHROOM / THE CATCH - MOMENTS LATER

Emmett walks into a bathroom that has marble sinks, salmon-colored tiles, wood paneling, three urinals and two stalls. After an appraisal of the enclosure, which is unoccupied, he enters the far compartment, closes the door, slides the bolt, withdraws his cellphone, thumbs it to life, TAPS an anonymous preset number and sets the device against his right ear.

EMMETT
Just spoke with Bertrand.
(he listens)
Not the walleyed Jesusy cult guy I was hoping for.
(he listens)
(MORE)

EMMETT (CONT'D)
Black, bald, in his forties, very arrogant and smarter than I'd like him to be.
(he listens)
Doesn't have a cellphone-- he jots stuff down on a legal notepad, one of those yellow ones.
(he listens)
If you don't hear from me, assume I'm with him or at his building and unable to reach out.
(he listens)
No. See if you can get me-

FOOTFALLS resound, and the bathroom door opens. Emmett peers through a slit in the stall and sees a WAITER walk to the sink. After the fellow washes and dries his hands, he departs, and the door closes, THUNK.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
-a new desk while I'm away.
(he listens)
Because I shouldn't sit at one that wobbles and has bumper stickers on it for radio stations that no longer exist.
(he listens)
It's irrelevant who put them there.
(he listens)
It's not like the I.R.S. doesn't have money. Our mission statement is "Take money."
(he listens)
Yeah. Gail's not thrilled, but she knows that when I get back we'll have extra good sex, so she's accepting.
(he listens)
Thanks. Bye.

EXT. DECK / THE CATCH - MOMENTS LATER

Emmett pulls a seat from the table and sits. Bertrand writes upon the notepad, stops, looks up and inspects the white man's glassy eyes.

EMMETT
Do I have toilet paper stuck to my face? Usually it's a shoe.

BERTRAND
Are you using any narcotics?

EMMETT
Do you count martinis or other sociables?

BERTRAND
No. Are you on any medication?

EMMETT
Blood thinners--for bad cholesterol-
but no psychotropics.

BERTRAND
Good. That will make the
orientation simpler. Shall we
order?

Emmett picks up the cedar plank to which the menu is affixed.

EMMETT
What do you recommend?

BERTRAND
Protein.

Titlecard: Portland. Now.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - NIGHT

Sitting on folding chairs in a rehearsal room that has foam panels and hanging baffles are three members of a string quartet. LYSA, a frowning thirty-four-year-old woman who has short blonde hair, an athletic build, a black shirt and gray slacks, shakes her head as she looks at the violin that lies across her lap. Nearby, KEN, a slim Asian fellow of the same age wearing jeans, a black t-shirt and glasses, tunes a cello, and FICHMAN, a tall forty-three-year-old with a neat silver-black beard, a long ponytail and brown clothes, removes an errant hair from his viola.

A cellphone RINGS, resounding bright and clear throughout the practice space. The violist withdraws the device from his pocket and presses it to his ear.

FICHMAN
Gail? Are you-
(he listens)
Okay. We're in the Haydn suite.

He closes the phone and looks at his peers.

FICHMAN (CONT'D)
She's here.

LYSA
She must've lost a weight.
(she looks around the
room)
Like all of it.

FICHMAN
She pulled into the parking lot.

LYSA
Then there are still more opportunities for delay. The bathroom. The snack machine. An interesting flyer.

FICHMAN
We're going to discuss this with her. She's dealing with a lot.

LYSA
And now so are we.

FICHMAN
We're discussing it with her.

LYSA
We "discussed" it before.

FICHMAN
We'll include a discussion of that discussion.

KEN
This sounds riveting.

FOOTFALLS resonate outside the room, and the door swings open. Hastening through the portal and trailing a green coat that partially covers her mismatched outfit is GAIL LINDER, a lean and flush thirty-eight-year-old woman of average height with sunken cheeks, bleary emerald eyes, knotted brown hair and an upturned nose. Held in her long-fingered hands is a black violin case that drips.

KEN (CONT'D)
Did your violin just have his bath?

GAIL
Coffee. I know, I know. Sorry guys.
(she closes the door)
Last time.

The tardy woman removes her coat, and the seated members of the quartet exchange serious glances.

FICHMAN
Gail.

GAIL
Do you-
(she looks around)
Just a minute.

She hastens to a box of tissues, plucks several and walks to her chair, where she wipes the coffee lacquer from her case.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Yes?

FICHMAN
We know that you're going through a difficult time.

GAIL
But.

FICHMAN
But all of our lives are being affected by this. We barely made that last performance happen and it was of a quality that does not guarantee a renewal of our contract with Hausman.

Gail nods, looks at Lysa, whose face is cold, glances at Ken, who averts his eyes, and returns her gaze to Fichman.

GAIL
Have you guys made some sort of decision?

FICHMAN
No. We want to know what you think we should do-- what you think is fair...considering...

The lank brunette looks at her violin and ruminates. After a few thoughtful moments, she raises her gaze.

GAIL
I will leave the group if I can't get my shit together in the next two weeks-- show up on time, play better, be more focused. It's been important to have an unaffected part of my life, but everything's affected, and I'm not oblivious of the impact I'm having on all of you, which isn't fair.

The other members of the quartet exchange glances. Fichman and Ken nod, and Lysa reluctantly shrugs. From her coat, Gail withdraws a folded book of sheet music.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Let's play some crappy Mozart.

FICHMAN
You say that as if he wrote something that wasn't crappy.

GAIL
That implication was accidental.

INT. THE SICK FISH - LATER

The bar is an old, wood-panelled establishment, which is illuminated by rose and purple lights and inhabited by a score of CUSTOMERS. Near a small, empty stage and sitting in a booth are Gail, with a glass of red wine at her elbow, and Fichman, drinking beer from a small brown bottle that has a picture of a cat on fire and is called, 'Cat on Fire.'

GAIL
Lysa must have wanted me out.

The bearded fellow sets his drink upon the table.

FICHMAN
She only knows you in the context of this group.

GAIL
I don't really blame her.

FICHMAN
Any group that lasts--any relationship or partnership of any kind--has its crucibles.
(he sips his beer)
Lysa wasn't so easy to deal with when she broke up with Andrea.

GAIL
Thanks for saying that, but this is different. And her playing wasn't affected the way mine's been.

FICHMAN
So...nothing...?

Gail shakes her head.

GAIL
The home phone rang as I was leaving-- that's why I was late. Turned out to be a sales call.

Sympathy shines in Fichman's eyes.

FICHMAN
Are you feeling any better?

GAIL
Not really. Every time the phone rings, it happens. My stomach knots, and I get lightheaded, and I think the same thing-- is it Emmett? Or that maybe it's a call from the I.R.S, and they've located him. But it never is. And then it hits me--that he's missing--and I get sick all over again.

She looks at her phone, and the screen informs her that she has ‘0 Messages.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Do you know how many times the phone rings in four months? How many times I go through this cycle?

An idea occurs to Fichman, and for a moment, he considers how to best express it.

GAIL (CONT'D)
What?

FICHMAN
Why don’t you turn your phone off?

Irritation darkens Gail’s face, and she waits for the feeling to pass before she replies.

GAIL
Forget about him?

FICHMAN
No. Just give yourself a break from the seesaw of hope and despair that happens whenever the phone rings. Turn it off for four hours. Eight hours. Turn it off when you go to sleep. Check your messages twice a day, and control how often you swing up and down.

GAIL
You’re right.
(she nods)
What you’re saying is logical, but I don’t know that I can do that. It’ll feel like the beginning of...

Tears sparkle in her eyes, and she looks down at her hands.

FICHMAN
Of giving up?

The woman nods her head.

FICHMAN (CONT'D)
I think it’s good for you to remain positive, but it might be helpful if you to start to think about m-

GAIL
Moving on? I won’t. I know he’s still alive.

Doubtful but polite, the bearded fellow nods his head and offers his beer.

FICHMAN
Cat on Fire?

INT. BEDROOM / THE LINDER HOUSE - NIGHT

Dressed in blue flannel pajamas and big floppy socks, Gail walks into a rose-colored bedroom that has two bureaus, two closets and a king-sized bed. Presently, she claims a laptop computer from a nightstand, sets it on the mattress and unfolds its slim halves. As if she were a baseball player sliding into a home plate, the lank musician sprawls upon her stomach, directly in front of the WHIRRING machine.

With the cursor, she selects an icon in the top left corner. A banner for the 'National Missing Persons Forum' appears on the screen, and the woman highlights a menu option. Presently, a new listing replaces the other, entitled, 'Unidentified Persons & Bodies.'

Gail looks at a photograph on the wall-- a picture of her, wearing a vanilla wedding gown, standing beside Emmett (the martini drinker from the fish restaurant), whose bright white smile matches his tuxedo.

With the image of her missing husband fixed fresh in her mind, she peruses the faces of the nameless and the dead.

GAIL
Please don't be here.

EXT. CAMPFIRE CLEARING IN THE WOODS - TWILIGHT

Burdened by heavy camping backpacks and glazed with sweat, Gail and Emmett descend an inclined dirt path into a small, flat clearing that is surrounded by tall and knotty trees.

GAIL
Finally.
(she PANTS)
I haven't felt my fingertips since we passed that pile of moose nuggets.

EMMETT
You wanted to go the scenic route.

GAIL
Not all of my ideas are excellent.

EMMETT
It's fun to humor you.

The blonde man sets his burden down and looks at his wife.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
Let me help y-

Gail's backpack THUMPS upon the dirt and tips over. After two strides, Emmett stops, leans forward and kisses his wife on the mouth. The musician withdraws from her husband, shaking her hand.

GAIL
I've gotta taste salty.

EMMETT
I like your salts.

The blonde man kisses her neck and savors the taste.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
Better than prosciutto.

GAIL
It's so romantic when you compare me to pork.

EMMETT
Expensive pork.

The musician playfully shoves her husband away, removes her t-shirt and flings it at the grinning fellow's face.

GAIL
I'm gonna wash off.

She hastens up the trail, pursued by her spouse.

EXT. SMALL POND IN THE WOODS - SAME

Gail emerges from the between two trees, pries off her hiking boots, peels off filthy socks and steps out of her shorts. Wearing her sweaty sports bra and underwear, she hastens into the still pond until only her head and shoulders are visible. A moment later, Emmett, dressed in boxer shorts, SPLASHES into the water.

GAIL
Careful! There're rocks.

The blonde man surges toward his wife and wraps his arms around her. Kissing, the couple floats in the pond like a buoy. After a long warm moment, they withdraw and look at each other.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Thank you so much for doing this. I haven't been out here in forever.

EMMETT
Of course. I wish I had more time for stuff like this.

GAIL
Don't worry about it-- it's like back when we were engaged and we-
(MORE)

GAIL (CONT'D)
(she sees something)
There’s a wood turtle.

EMMETT
Was that innuendo?

GAIL
No, look.

Gail points and Emmett turns his head. Floating on the water ten feet away from the couple is a green and brown oval-shaped shell from which extrudes the dark, rugose head of a wood turtle.

EMMETT
Let’s give him a show.

GAIL
The wood turtle?

Emmett nods his head. Gail studies the ancient face of the floating creature.

GAIL (CONT'D)
He doesn’t look arousable.

Emmett sinks into the pond, PLUNK. The submerged man kisses Gail’s nape, bares her stomach, kisses her tan skin, sinks lower, kisses beside her belly button and sinks lower, sliding his hands down her back onto her buttocks. He leans his head forward.

Flush, the woman looks at the turtle, who returns her gaze.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Hey. Go away.

Gail gently SPLASHES water toward the floating observer, and it eyes her derisively.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Please?

After a moment of inscrutable thought, the creature slowly rotates away from the couple.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Gail is surprised by what is happening under the water.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Maybe we should-

A small GROAN of pleasure escapes her throat. Presently, her underwear floats to the surface.

The woman thrusts her arms deep into the water. Boxer shorts float to the top, and soon Emmett rises.

Gail slides her hands across the man's broad back, and he cradles her submerged body in his arms. She shifts her hips, and the tips of her knees surface on either side of his shoulders like two small islands.

Connected below the surface, they rock back and forth. Twilit ripples travel across the pond.

Presently, Gail looks into Emmett's bright blue eyes and forgets her surroundings.

INT. BEDROOM / THE LINDER HOUSE - MORNING

Gail wakes up, twisted in the sheets of the large bed. She looks to her left. Upon the nightstand is a framed photograph of the Linders, dressed in camping gear and holding the grumpy wood turtle, which has a cigarette dangling from its mouth.

INT. GALA ROOM / THE HAUSMAN BUILDING - NIGHT

Chandeliers dangle from the ceiling of a huge gala space, illuminating two hundred formally-dressed PARTYGOERS who converse, drink champagne and nibble appetizers that are adorned with pomegranate seeds or cilantro leaves or sliced truffles. Seated upon a corner dais and wearing black, Gail, Fichman, Lysa and Ken play their instruments, reach a concluding cadence and allow their final harmony a few moments to decay.

FICHMAN
Number ten in C.

GAIL
(whispered)
Hope they save us some crabcakes.

The performers turn through their sheet music, locate the selected composition and nestle their instruments.

Fichman tilts his head back and nods, commencing the group. Bows glide across taut strings, and wooden hollows resonate. Music blossoms.

A BLONDE WOMAN in a revealing blue dress walks by the dais, high heels CLICKING, a glass of champagne in her hand.

BLONDE WOMAN
Emmett!

Heart racing, Gail looks up from her sheet music. Nearby, the caller in blue waves her hand at a portly silver-haired FELLOW in an iridescent suit, who has a red drink and a redder face.

FELLOW
C'mere so I can see what's happening to that dress.

The Blonde Woman smiles, feigns embarrassment and approaches the Fellow. Gail fingers a dissonant note, garnering looks from the other players.

INT. BATHROOM / THE HAUSMAN BUILDING - LATER

Inside a white marble bathroom and standing at the sink, Gail SPLASHES water on her face and wipes her red eyes. Her hands are shaking.

GAIL
Christ.

From her purse, she withdraws her cellphone. The screen glows, informing her that she has '0 Messages.' Disappointed, she replaces the device.

EXT. PARKING LOT / THE HAUSMAN BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

The parking lot for the Hausman Building is illuminated by sodium lamps around which furry moths orbit. Walking, Gail waves at her fellow players, who soon return her farewell.

FICHMAN
Take care.

The lank musician continues past bumpers, discarded champagne flutes and five drunken Partygoers, toward a red sports car. There, she unlocks the door, climbs inside, seals the vehicle and slots her key in the ignition.

INT. RED SPORTS CAR - SAME

Gail twists her right hand, and the engine RUMBLES. She shifts into reverse, glances at her mirrors and backs out of the space.

The phone RINGS.

Filled with hope, Gail STOMPS the brakes, fishes inside her purse, withdraws her cellphone and thumbs it to life. Upon the screen, she sees the name, 'Clayton Chatterjee.'

Her stomach drops.

A black car HONKS at the protruding back end of Gail's vehicle. Oblivious, she taps the phone on and presses it to her ear.

GAIL
Have you heard something?

The black car HONKS again, flashing its lights, and Gail shifts into drive and reinserts her vehicle. Staring at the furry moths that orbit a nearby sodium lamp, she listens to the caller, stunned by what she hears.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Is he hurt?

The black car SCREECHES past, offering a final HONK.

GAIL (CONT'D)
But he’s healthy-- physically?
(she listens)
Okay. Can you put him on the phone?
(she listens)
Okay. Where’re you keeping him?
(she listens)
I’m coming there now.
(she listens)
Tell him I’m on my way if he gets up.

Gail SNAPS her phone shut and sets it down. A mixture of shock, relief and fear sparkle in her green eyes. As she backs her car from the space, the orbiting moths change the direction of their flight for no known reason.

INT. WAITING AREA / THIRD FLOOR / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - LATER

The elevator doors open, and Gail enters a sky blue waiting area that is occupied by three other PEOPLE and furnished with four white sofas, six metal chairs and a clock that shows it is half past ten.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Gail.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE, a tall thirty-seven-year-old Indian-American with a mustache, slicked-back hair, small eyes and a wrinkled blue suit, walks across the room, surprised by the unhealthy appearance of the lank musician.

GAIL
I know I don’t look great.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
You look-

GAIL
What room’s he in?

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Come with me.

After hugging Gail, the man opens a door labelled, ‘Hall A.’

INT. HALL A / THIRD FLOOR / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - SAME

The woman is followed by the Indian-American into a baby blue passageway that has white doors on either side. Together, they proceed east.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
The doctor--her name's Tsang--
would like to speak with you before
you vis-

GAIL
She can talk to me after.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
It's a precondition.

Outrage flashes in Gail's eyes. The FOOTFALLS of her boots echo loudly.

GAIL
A "precondition?"
(she shakes her head)
I've waited long enough for this.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
The doctor just wants to prepare
you for your encounter.

Fear diffuses the woman's indignation.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE (CONT'D)
It'll only take a minute.

GAIL
Fine.
(she looks at Chatterjee)
Have you seen him?

Something sad overtakes the features of the Indian-American, and he pauses beside a door that has a placard, which reads, 'Dr. Iris Tsang, Neurologist.'

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
I'll wait outside.

Gail opens the door and walks into the doctor's office.

DR. TSANG (O.S.)
Please have a seat.

The door shuts, THUNK.

Leaning against the wall, Clayton Chatterjee adjusts his concealed gun holster, pulls out his cellphone and TAPS its gallery icon. Pictures flash upon the screen, many of which show him and his wife, who is a chipper and petite Indian woman. After a moment of scrutiny, he locates and expands an image of a party where he and his spouse clink glasses against a pair upheld by Emmett and Gail.

FOOTFALLS resound within the doctor's office, and he pockets his phone.

The door opens.

Numb and pale, Gail emerges from the doctor's office.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
I'm sorry.

The stunned woman does not respond. Light glimmers in the perspiration that covers her face.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE (CONT'D)
Are you ready to see him?

Gail nods her head, and Clayton Chatterjee escorts her up the hallway and around a corner.

Presently, they reach a divide where a sign on the wall points in two directions-- to the left lies the 'PULMONOLOGY DEPARTMENT' and to the right are 'IN-PATIENT ROOMS 300-321.'

From his pocket, Clayton Chatterjee withdraws a handkerchief that he gives to Gail. After she wipes her face, the tall fellow motions to the right.

INT. IN-PATIENT HALL / THIRD FLOOR / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - SAME

They proceed past closed doors and stop beside number '319.' Gently, Clayton Chatterjee KNOCKS.

The sound echoes inside the room, but elicits no response.

Fearful but resolute, the woman seizes the doorknob, twists her hand and walks forward.

INT. ROOM 319 / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - SAME

A small rose lamp glows upon a nightstand inside the baby blue hospital room, illuminating the white robe and gaunt face of the completely bald man who sits in a railed twin bed, gazing forward with sunken eyes. After a disorienting moment, Gail recognizes the stranger as her missing husband, Emmett. Her heart pounds.

GAIL
Emmett?

The man looks at her, and she forces a smile to her face.

GAIL (CONT'D)
It's me.

The lank musician closes the door and approaches the bed, observed by the silent patient.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Gail.

Lamplight sparkles in her shining eyes, but she refuses to shed any tears. Blankly, the man stares at her.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Do you remember me?

Emmett does not reply. Gail leans over and hugs him. He accepts, but does not return, her embrace.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Gail. Your wife. Don't-

Her voice CRACKS, and she closes her mouth. Once she has regained her composure, she rises and clears her throat.

Emmett blinks.

GAIL (CONT'D)
You're going to get better, okay?
I- I love you.

The bald man leans back and stares at the ceiling. Upon the right side of his neck are two small triangular scars.

The lank musician sees the marks, looks at her husband's blank face, turns away and departs from the quiet enclosure.

INT. BATHROOM / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

A flung door BANGS against a rose-colored wall as Gail hurries into the bathroom. Presently, she hides herself inside a stall, slides the lock, sits down, presses her hands to her face and CRIES.

INT. DR. TSANG'S OFFICE / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - LATER

Numb and with red eyes, Gail enters a room that has framed degrees, file cabinets, a wooden desk and a computer, behind which sits DR. TSANG, a petite thirty-two-year-old Chinese-American woman who wears a white smock over a blue sweater and matching slacks. After closing the door, the lank musician sits in a cushioned chair opposite the neurologist.

DR. TSANG
Did he show any signs of recognition?

GAIL
No. Nothing. Is it some type of amnesia that he has?

DR. TSANG
I don't think so. He doesn't seem to know anything at all-- how to talk or walk or even eat.

For a few moments, Gail is unable to breathe.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
Would you like a-

GAIL
The group that he was investigating- they did this to him?

DR. TSANG
Mr. Chatterjee seems to think so, but I don't know what it is they did, which is why-

GAIL
Do you think it's curable?

DR. TSANG
I'd rather not speculate.
(she opens a manila folder)
I'd like your permission to perform a CT and see if there's a-

GAIL
CT?

DR. TSANG
CAT scan. See if there are any physical anomalies in his brain.

GAIL
That's with radiation?

DR. TSANG
Yes.

Gail ruminates.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
His insurance will cover-

GAIL
It's not that. Emmett didn't even go through the x-ray at the airport- he opted for the fat guy who pats you down.
(she looks at the file)
You think it'll help?

DR. TSANG
CT imaging is the best place to begin.

The lank musician looks away and fixes her gaze upon a nearly empty bowl of candy.

GAIL
So...okay. Go ahead. But I'd like to be here.
(she recalls something)
Do you have any idea what those scars are from-- the two triangles on his neck?

DR. TSANG
He didn't have those before?

GAIL
No.

DR. TSANG
I don't know what they're from.
(she looks at her monitor)
I'll schedule him for a CT at eleven.

GAIL
I'll be here before then.

INT. BEDROOM / THE LINDER HOUSE - NIGHT

Gail lies awake in bed, staring at the ceiling, her mind filled with questions, some of which have sad answers.

GAIL
You'll get better.

She looks at the wedding picture on the wall and lowers her gaze to the laptop computer, which she ponders. Presently, she takes the device from nightstand, sets it upon her bed, opens it up and TAPS the space bar. Blue-white light flashes upon the screen, and the central processing unit WHIRRS.

INT. HALL A / THIRD FLOOR / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - MORNING

Dressed in a gray sweater, black jeans and boots and carrying a laden backpack, Gail walks up the hallway, stops at Dr. Tsang's door and KNOCKS.

DR. TSANG (O.S.)
Come in.

INT. DR. TSANG'S OFFICE / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - SAME

The lank musician enters the office, and the neurologist looks up from her computer.

DR. TSANG
Good morning.

Gail closes the door.

GAIL
I brought gummy slugs.
(she points at the bowl of candy)
Saw you were running out.

Dr. Tsang smiles.

DR. TSANG
Thank you.

INT. X-RAY ROOM C (CT) / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - LATER

Two NURSES, a strong black man in his late twenties and a Hispanic woman in her forties, unbuckle Emmett from a gurney, lift him up and set him on the sliding plank that extrudes from the round gantry of the Computed Tomography (CT) machine while DR. WARBEN, a paunchy fifty-two-year-old radiologist with glasses and a weak chin, rolls an intravenous dye machine toward the unconscious patient. On the far side of the gray-blue room, Gail stands near the control booth door, watching the procedure, accompanied by Dr. Tsang.

DR. WARBEN
This is how we administer the contrast fluid.

The lank musician nods her head in acknowledgement as the Nurses swab Emmett's left arm and cover his chest with a protective vest.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH / X-RAY ROOM C (CT) - SAME

Dr. Tsang guides Gail into a small carpeted room, which has two cushioned chairs, a desk and the computer that controls the CT machine, which is visible on the far side of a lead-shielded window. Presently, Dr. Warben joins the waiting women and shuts the door behind him, THUNK.

DR. WARBEN
Sit down, Mrs. Linder-- there's nothing to be nervous about.

GAIL
Standing's more relaxing.

In the adjacent room, the Nurses repair to shielded alcoves.

DR. WARBEN
Anybody have any breath mints? I'm tasting this morning's coffee, which was from a gas station and wasn't unleaded.

Gail produces a RATTLING tin, from which the radiologist takes two mints, one of which he puts in his mouth.

DR. WARBEN (CONT'D)
Thanks.
(he pockets the second mint)
In case I burp.

Dr. Warben sits, swivels one hundred-and-eighty degrees and faces the array of monitors and keyboards on his desk.

INT. X-RAY ROOM C (CT) / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - SAME

Something CLICKS. The blue light atop the intravenous machine blinks, and the line running into Emmett's left arm quivers.

A moment later, the plank CLACKS, rises and begins its slow journey into the orifice that both beams and detects x-rays.

INT. WAITING AREA / THIRD FLOOR / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - LATER

Rested and wearing a neat olive-colored suit, Clayton Chatterjee sits on a couch opposite Gail.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Can I take you lunch?

GAIL
I want to be here.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Then let me bring you something so-

GAIL
They did this to him-- that group you were looking into. Brainwashed him or...or whatever this is.

Clayton Chatterjee is not exactly sure what he should say.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Right?

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
I don't know who else it could be.

GAIL
So what's the I.R.S. going to do? Now that you know?

The Indian-American ruminates, trying to think of a tactful and honest response.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Are you going to put more men on this?

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
He was found in a park two thousand miles from where he disappeared, and he hasn't said anything. All we have is the description he gave me when he called that last time, the fake name of the man he met and the fake name of the man who introduced them. There's nothing for the I.R.S. to put men on.

Anger flashes in Gail's green eyes.

GAIL
So you’re giving up? He’s like this and you and the government just move on? Focus your attention on rappers who don’t pay their taxes, while my husband’s a goddamn vegetable?

The tall fellow does not reply, his face evincing a mixture of frustration and pity.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Sorry. That wasn’t fair. I know you kept this case going long after everybody else’d given up.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
It’s okay. It’s not easy seeing him like this.

Into the waiting room strides Dr. Tsang. Gail looks over.

GAIL
Anything?

DR. TSANG
Let me show you.

INT. DR. TSANG’S OFFICE / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

The neurologist turns the computer monitor toward the lank musician and CLICKS her mouse. Upon the screen glows a pulsating, high-contrast black-and-white oval.

DR. TSANG
This is his brain. A sixty-four slice reconstruction. Everything looks normal, except-

She CLICKS her mouse, and the image freezes.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
I saw this in his somatosensory cortex.

Squinting, Gail leans forward. Dr. Tsang puts the cursor in the toolbar, types in ‘750%’ and hits return. The image expands, filling the screen. With a pencil eraser, the neurologist TAPS two black pixels.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
That could be an error--our CT isn’t accurate below one millimeter- but when I looked at his occipital lobe-

Dr. Tsang types, RATTLING keys. The high-contrast image flickers, shuffling down the brain, and pauses, fixed on a middle slice that the neurologist then magnifies. Again, she TAPS an eraser beside two black pixels.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
And in his auditory cortex-

She types, RATTLING keys. Upon the screen, Gail sees a smaller slice from the bottom of the brain, which the neurologist then enlarges, revealing two more black pixels.

GAIL
What are they?

DR. TSANG
Anomalies. Something organic--maybe some kind of clot. They may have something or nothing to do with his current condition--without CTs of his brain before his disappearance, it's impossible to know.

GAIL
But they aren't in the parts of the brain that deal with memories.

Dr. Tsang is surprised by the comment.

GAIL (CONT'D)
I spent most of last night online.

DR. TSANG
You're right. These areas mainly deal with sensory information--touch, sight, hearing--rather than memories. Still, I think we should do an M.R.I. and get another look.

GAIL
Magnetic Resonance Imaging?

DR. TSANG
Did you sleep at all?

Gail shrugs.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
I'd like to do one while he's still under general. It's non-invasive--harmless--radiation, though I'm sure you knew that already.

GAIL
Who doesn't?

INT. X-RAY ROOM B (MRI) / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

With canvas straps and plastic buckles, the Nurses fasten Emmett to the plank that extrudes from the opening of a white Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine, which resembles an oversized clothes dryer. On the far side of the gray linoleum room, Gail stands next to Dr. Warben, who BURPS and treats himself to a purloined mint.

DR. WARBEN
Dr. Tsang told me to do a full-
(he sucks)
-body image.

Presently, the Nurses look at radiologist.

BLACK MALE NURSE
He's secure.

DR. WARBEN
'Kay.
(he sucks and looks at Gail)
You can sit over there-
(he sucks and points to a chair)
-while we image him. This one takes longer than the CT.
(he sucks twice)
Mmmmm. Do you have more of these?

Gail gives the tin of mints to Dr. Warben.

GAIL
Keep them.

The radiologist RATTLES the container, which is nearly full.

DR. WARBEN
My wife will appreciate this.

Dr. Warben departs from the room, and Gail walks over to the chair, where she sits and observes the goings-on. Presently, the Nurses slide the plank into the aperture, which completely surrounds Emmett so that only the bottoms of his feet are visible from the outside. After shifting the patient's alignment and adjusting two dials, the attendants depart and close the hall door, THUNK.

Something CLACKS, and Gail looks at the top of the machine, where she sees a green light blink twice, remain dark and blink twice. In an adjacent room, something BEEPS.

The lank woman watches the bottoms of her husband's feet. A moment later, the MRI machine HUMS.

Emmett's toes curl, and his body trembles.

Gail grows concerned.

GAIL
Doctor...?

The patient lurches against his canvas straps, convulsive.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Doctor!

The HUMMING grows louder. Gail rises from her seat; a drop of blood trickles from her right nostril, and she teeters, dizzy. Emmett GROANS.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Shut it off!

Gail runs toward the machine. Something metallic SCREECHES, and a light flashes. Blinded, the woman falls to the ground, where her palms and knees SPLASH water.

Something EXPLODES, and darkness covers everything.

A siren WAILS.

A switch CLICKS, and emergency bulbs radiate dim amber light throughout the room.

On her knees, Gail shivers, GASPING for air, blood dripping from her nose into the inch of water that now covers the floor. She raises her head and looks toward the MRI machine’s gantry hole, which is dark.

Into the room race Dr. Warben and the Nurses, confused and SPLASHING water. The radiologist sees Gail.

DR. WARBEN
Are you okay?

GAIL
Check him.

She points at her husband and rises.

DR. WARBEN
Go into the hall while-

GAIL
Check him.

Dr. Tsang appears in the doorway and appraises the tableau, stunned and alarmed by what she sees.

DR. TSANG
Mrs. Linder, please come with me.

Ignoring the doctor, Gail hastens toward the MRI machine. The Nurses withdraw the plank, revealing Emmett, who stares directly up, mouth agape, still and silent.

Gail’s stomach drops.

Dr. Tsang hastens toward Emmett, past Dr. Warben and the Nurses, her flats SPLASHING water. She presses a stethoscope to the man's chest, and the lank musician waits, breath held.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
Prep a ventilator and get a gurney.

The attendants hasten from the room.

GAIL
What's going on?

DR. TSANG
He's in a coma.

Stunned by the information, Gail exhales a shuddering breath, looks down at her husband, takes his hand and squeezes it.

Dr. Tsang turns away from the Linders and sees something strange overhead.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
Warben?

Warben looks over, and the neurologist points her penlight at a three-foot-wide hole in the ceiling, the edges of which are covered with scintillating ice. Pipes and sparking cables from the space between floors dangle from the orifice.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
Um...?

DR. WARBEN
I have no idea.

FOOTFALLS resound in the hallway, and the Nurses roll a gurney into the room, its wheels dragging rooster tails across the water.

INT. WAITING AREA / THIRD FLOOR / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - LATER

Numb with shock, Gail sits on a couch in the waiting area, cotton in her right nostril and circular bandages upon her left arm, staring at the screen of her laptop computer, which shows a document entitled, 'The Glasgow Coma Scale.' From the elevator strides Clayton Chatterjee, holding a large brown paper bag.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Hey I-
(he appraises her)
Did you get a nosebleed?

GAIL
Yeah.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
I got you a turkey club.

The Indian-American sits, removes a white paper bag from the large brown one and slides it across the table.

GAIL
Thanks.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Please eat something.

GAIL
Emmett went into a coma.

Clayton Chatterjee's eyes widen.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
What happened?

GAIL
They did an MRI, and there was a big malfunction--a ton of shit they can't explain--and he had some sort of seizure and- and went into a coma. It's a six on the Glasgow Scale.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
How serious is a six?

Gail opens her mouth to respond, but cannot, and so just nods her head.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE (CONT'D)
You should stay with me and Lavanya until things-

GAIL
Thanks, but I can't just- just sit around and wait, hoping. That's all I did for four months. I need to go do something.
(she opens a blank document on her computer)
What do you know about the group that took him?

Concerned, Clayton Chatterjee shakes his head.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
I haven't concealed anything from you. Really. We don't have anything, if we did, I'd be-

GAIL
Repeat what you know. Even if you think it's pointless.

The Indian-American sees that the woman is fixed on the idea.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Just humor me.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
We received an anonymous tip that an organization--maybe a cult--in the Seattle area was offering treatments to people who had experienced mental traumas.
(he points at her sandwich)
If I go through this, you have to eat.

Typing, the lank musician nods her head.

GAIL
I will.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
The whole thing and the macaroni salad and the juice.

GAIL
Macaroni salad doesn't taste good to anybody older than eight and younger than eighty.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Everything.

GAIL
Fine.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
The treatment cost ninety-thousand in cash, which was never reported and why the I.R.S. got involved.
(he withdraws a water bottle)
Emmett joined a dozen support groups in the Seattle area, using his first name and the last name Fields, pretending to be an affluent man who'd lost his five-year-old daughter.

A sad memory resurfaces for Gail.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE (CONT'D)
A man in one of the groups named Leonard--who has since vanished--recommended this treatment to Emmett and arranged a meeting between Emmett and Alain Bertrand, who is a gatekeeper in the organization-- if there is an organization and it's not just complete fiction.
(he drinks)
Alain Bertrand is also a fake name.

RATTLING keys, the woman types 'Bertrand, Alain' beneath a thick column of data. Presently, she adds a bullet point.

GAIL
Bertrand was black, right?

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Yes. Emmett said he was bald and in his forties. Smart. Arrogant. Wrote really small on one of those yellow legal pads.

With nimble musician's fingers, she types, 'black; bald; fortyish; arrogant; yellow legal pad; small handwriting.'

GAIL
What's the restaurant they met at?

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
The Catch.

Gail types, 'The Catch,' and puts a bullet point beside it.

GAIL
You talked to the waiters? Checked receipts?

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Two weeks after he went missing. Bertrand paid in cash, and the waitress barely remembered him.

Continually, the musician's fingers RATTLE keys.

GAIL
What's her name?

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Sara-
(he thinks)
Choe. Choi. Korean-American.

GAIL
What time did they meet?

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
Around six.

GAIL
Is there anything else?

Clayton Chatterjee points at the bag of food.

CLAYTON CHATTERJEE
There's a spork.

INT. BEDROOM / THE LINDER HOUSE - NIGHT

Gail sets three pairs of jeans into a pine green overnight bag that is resting upon her bed, and Fichman, wearing corduroy pants and a loose sweater, materializes in the doorway, holding a glass of beer.

FICHMAN
This is a bad idea.

GAIL
I need answers.
(she opens a drawer)
I need to help him or at least find and expose the people who did this.

FICHMAN
Because a violinist is better at that than the government?

GAIL
They're better, but they gave up. And I've been married to an I.R.S. C.I. long enough to know something.

The longhaired fellow wipes suds from his beard as the woman withdraws t-shirts.

FICHMAN
So what's your plan?

GAIL
I'll go to that restaurant--the place where Emmett met Bertrand--get a table near the door and watch everyone who comes in.

Into the overnight bag, she places the garments.

FICHMAN
Why do you think he'll go back?
(he sips his beer)
Bertrand used an alias and if he's smart enough to-

GAIL
Emmett pointed out that he was arrogant. If The Catch is a place that Bertrand really likes--and if he considers himself beyond the reach of the law--which he is, since there isn't any evidence against him--he might go back.

FICHMAN
And if he shows up, then what? You'll jump him?

Gail opens a closet door.

GAIL
I'll take some pictures and send them to Chatterjee.
(she pulls a jacket off of a hangar)
Get his license plate. Follow him.

FICHMAN
Don’t follow him.

GAIL
I’ll do whatever I need to.

Fichman is uneasy with her answer.

FICHMAN
Gail. If he’s part of some cult-
(he shakes his head)
I don’t like this idea at all in any way.

After putting the jacket into her bag, the woman looks at her fellow musician and longtime friend.

GAIL
I can’t just let it go. I need- I need to know I did everything I could. Something more than just accept how goddamn horrible everything is and sit around wondering why? why? why?

Gail returns to the closet and looks at the shoes that are lined up like insects upon the floor.

FICHMAN
Then you have to call or email me every day and let me know you’re okay. That’s the only way I’ll let you do this without tattling to Chatterjee or your father or whoever.
(he drinks)
Look what they did to Emmett, who’s a professional.

Setting pairs of sneakers and boots into the bag, she nods.

GAIL
I’ll call or email you every day.

FICHMAN
Twice a day.
(he fingers his wedding ring)
And email my anonymous account, so Melanie won’t come across it.

GAIL
Deal. And you should find a replacement violin-- I don’t know how long I’ll be gone.

FICHMAN
We’ll get a temporary one.

GAIL
Okay. And can you get me a fake ID from one of your students? One that says Gail Smith?

INT. ROOM 512 / INTENSIVE CARE UNIT / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - DAWN

Dawn leaks through the blinds, painting the small intensive care room a rich azure hue. Dressed in jeans and a green sweatshirt and wearing her hair in a tight knot, Gail walks across the room to her slight and sepulchral husband, who lies upon a railed bed with a respirator tube in his mouth and two intravenous lines trailing from his left arm.

GAIL
(quietly)
Emmett. It's Gail. I'm going away for a little while, but your sister's coming in from New York to see you, and so's your mom. And Clayton, Aaron and Leslie will also visit.

She kisses her comatose husband's forehead.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Get better.

INT. DR. TSANG'S OFFICE / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Somebody KNOCKS. Preoccupied and dishevelled, Dr. Tsang looks at the door.

DR. TSANG
Come in.

Gail enters the room.

DR. TSANG (CONT'D)
I'm so so sorry about what happened yesterday. I've never seen anything like that before, nor has anybody I've spoken to.

GAIL
Could those things in his brain--the anomalies--be some kind of tracking devices? Hooked up to a satellite?

DR. TSANG
That doesn't sound plausible... though right now, I don't have any better answers.

From her pocket, the lank musician withdraws a folded sheet of paper, which she places upon the desk.

GAIL
I'm going away for a little while. If something happens to him--if he wakes up or there's any significant change in his condition--and you can't reach me, call those numbers.

INT. RED SPORTS CAR - MORNING

Morning light glares upon the passenger window and Gail's black sunglasses as she drives north on I-5, listening to classical MUSIC. She glances at the digital clock on the curvilinear dashboard, which reads '10:01 AM,' fishes inside her purse and withdraws her cellphone. After she flips the device open, she highlights 'The Catch,' thumbs the connect button, places the receiver to her ear and waits.

GAIL
Yes. Hi. I'd like to make a reservation for dinner. Tonight at six.
(she listens)
One person.

INT. LEVEL 2 / COVERED PARKING LOT / MARITIME HOTEL - NOON

The red sports car slides into a parking space, where its lights and RUMBLING motor die. Presently, the driver's side door opens, and Gail emerges, carrying an Ultramart bag. She walks to the back of her vehicle, surveys the environs, which appear to be uninhabited, and kneels.

From the bag, she withdraws five permanent markers that are of adjacent blue hues. She holds them up to her license plate, determines which color best matches the numbers and puts the losers back in the bag. After a quick survey of the garage, she POPS the winner's top and changes a '3' into a fairly believable '8.'

INT. ROOM 912 / MARITIME HOTEL - AFTERNOON

Gail enters a blue and white ninth floor hotel room and sets her stuffed overnight bag beside a window through which downtown Seattle and the Space Needle are visible.

EXT. THE BOOK HEAP - LATE DAY

From a large used bookstore the lank musician emerges, carrying two heavy shopping bags. An OLD MAN and WOMAN walk toward the entrance, and Gail holds the door open for them.

OLD WOMAN
Thanks.

OLD MAN
We not giving any money.
(to his wife)
It's as bad as San Francisco.

The couple enters the book store.

GAIL
I'm not homeless.

INT. RED SPORTS CAR - LATE DAY

Quiet classical MUSIC emanates from the car speakers as Gail drives. To her left, sunlight glows upon the sharp tips of choppy aquamarine waves, and to her right sit large bright mansions. She sees a sign that reads, 'Bellworth Drive' and applies her brakes.

After flipping the turn signal, Gail guides her car from the paved street onto a descending gravel road. The hood of the vehicle dips, and rocks CRACKLE.

Presently, she drives down the slope into the half-filled parking lot of The Catch, steers toward a space that is close to the restaurant's entrance, passes it by, stops and shifts into reverse. Cutting the wheel and looking into her mirrors, she backs into the opening.

The woman brakes, shifts into park, shuts off the car (its license plate hidden from view) and withdraws two large hardbacks, which are entitled, 'Strange Phenomena' and 'Legal Case Studies.' She unfolds a steel utility tool, slices the lawbook's inner binding, RIPS the cover loose and repeats the process with the other tome.

After collapsing the blade, Gail places the 'Legal Case Studies' exterior atop the 'Strange Phenomena' interior and tucks the hybrid under her arm.

INT. FRONT HALL / THE CATCH - MOMENTS LATER

The lank musician strides up the front hall, which has dark wood panelling and Terracotta tiles. At a lectern stands a short redheaded HOST, a chipper man of twenty-two years dressed in The Catch uniform-- a dark brown tie, matching slacks and a salmon-colored shirt.

HOST
Good evening and welcome to The Catch.

GAIL
Hi. I have a reservation at six. Gail Smith.

Smiling, the young man surveys his list, finds her name, marks it with an extraordinary check and nods his head.

HOST
You wanted a table by the front?

GAIL
Yep.

HOST
Come with me.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - SAME

The Host escorts Gail into a sepia-colored dining room, where sunlight and the dim bulbs of artful copper fixtures illuminate the CUSTOMERS who are sitting at half of the thirty burnished wood tables. Presently, the redheaded fellow pulls out a cushioned birch chair and seats the woman.

GAIL
Thanks.

HOST
You're welcome. Peter will be your server tonight.

GAIL
Is a waitress named Sara here?

HOST
Sara Choi?

GAIL
Yeah.

HOST
She went back to college a couple months ago to finish her degree.

A small hope fades within the lank musician.

GAIL
Oh.

HOST
Peter will make sure you are well taken care of.

GAIL
Okay. Thanks.

With a bright smile that is not at all forced, the chipper Host departs.

Gail surveys the room. Amongst the ELDERLY PEOPLE and the white and Asian BUSINESSMEN (who have removed their ties to ease the flow of happy hour drinks) are a BLACK MAN and WOMAN in their early twenties, formally dressed, engaged in an unhappy conversation.

Presently, the lank musician looks away from the young couple to the far side of the restaurant, where she sees glass doors. Beyond them lies a wooden deck that is furnished with ten empty tables.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Would you like to sit outside?

Gail looks up and sees PETER, a stoic thirty-five-year-old Asian waiter who has thin lips, a stud earring and several blonde streaks running through his slicked-back hair.

GAIL
It's a little cold for that.

PETER
I concur. I'm Peter, and I'll be your server this evening. Would you like something from the bar?

The lank musician looks at the bar and descries a wooden bowl nestled between two OLD WOMEN.

GAIL
Pretzels?

PETER
Marvellous.

GAIL
It's too early to drink.

PETER
Would you prefer a cup or a bowl?

GAIL
Cup is fine.

PETER
Marvellous.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - LATE DUSK

The light of late dusk turns the glass doors into glowing blue rectangles. At her small table, Gail CRUNCHES pretzels as she watches a party of four white WOMEN enter the establishment, talking animatedly to each other. A shadow slides across the floor, and the lank musician looks up.

PETER
Would you care for another cup of pretzels? Or perhaps something from our award-winning menu?

The Women are escorted into the restaurant by the Host.

GAIL
I'd like the bisque.

PETER
Marvellous.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - NIGHT

The elderly people and drinking businessmen have been succeeded by COUPLES and FAMILIES, all of whom are white or Asian. After a brief survey of the diners, the lone woman returns her attention to the fake lawbook, which is open to a chapter entitled, 'Capgras Delusion -- The belief that a person has been replaced by a duplicate.'

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - LATER

Eight customers remain in The Catch, including Gail, who has finished the major part of a salmon entree and read more than half an inch of her book on strange phenomena. Passing by, Peter sets a wooden billfold upon the table, CLACK.

PETER
Take your time.

Gail looks at the check, sets down two fifties and stretches her arms, eliciting CRACKS. Stealthily, stoic waiter returns, claims the billfold and peeks inside.

PETER (CONT'D)
I'll return with your change.

GAIL
No change.

Surprised, Peter nods his head.

PETER
Thank you very much.

GAIL
I'm Gail. And I'll see you tomorrow.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

Gail and Emmett, red-eyed and distraught, stand in an office opposite DOCTOR SILVER, who wears a blue smock and has a grave expression upon his wrinkled face.

GAIL
We put her on her back every time she went to sleep-- even for naps.

DOCTOR
Although there seems to be some correlation between sleeping position and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, we still don't know exactly what causes it.

GAIL
But we did everything we could. I read thirty-seven books on childcare before she was born.

DOCTOR
Mrs. Linder...
(he shakes his head)
It’s not your fault.

GAIL
But there’s some reason this happened-- and happens to those other babies too. It’s not just some inexplicable fluke.

The blonde fellow puts his right arm over his wife’s shoulders and squeezes her.

EMMETT
Gail. We’ve taken up enough of Doctor Silver’s time.
(to the Doctor)
Thank you.

The woman looks at her husband, who turns toward the door, his eyes brimming with tears that he does not allow to fall.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
Let’s go.

Sad and frustrated, Gail nods her head. Together, the bereaved couple walks toward the exit.

DOCTOR SILVER
If you have questions you may call me at any time.

GAIL
Okay. Thank you.

The blonde fellow opens the door.

INT. HALLWAY / HOSPITAL - SAME

Emmett and Gail enter the hallway. After the blonde man shuts the door, he pulls his wife into his broad chest and hugs her tightly.

EMMETT
I booked us a room at the The Pinnacle Hotel.

Gail withdraws from his embrace and shakes her head.

GAIL
I don’t want to-

EMMETT
We need a break from this. To be someplace--anyplace--other than where it happened. Please.

GAIL
Okay.

The blonde man kisses his wife's forehead, takes her hand and squeezes it. Toward the far end of the hall, they walk, holding each other, their minds filled with awful questions that have no known answers.

INT. ROOM 912 / MARITIME HOTEL - NOON

An alarm BEEPS. Gail awakens, reaches across the bed and SLAPS the snooze bar. Silence spreads throughout the hotel room, and she opens her eyes.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - TWILIGHT

Peter sets a cup of pretzels beside the phenomenology book, which is open to a chapter entitled, 'Prosopagnosia: The Inability to Recognise Faces.' Gail, dressed in an orange sweater and brown slacks, looks up from her reading.

GAIL
Thank you.

PETER
Shall I return in thirty minutes?

GAIL
Please.

The waiter departs. After a quick survey of the Caucasian CUSTOMERS who people the dining room, the woman returns her attention to the book.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - NIGHT

The restaurant is filled with white PEOPLE, including two separate groups who celebrate the morning and dusk birthdays of a CHILD and an OLDSTER. Gail monitors the front hall, where a well-dressed BLACK MAN and WOMAN, both of whom are in their thirties, talk to the Host. Presently, the couple is escorted to a table on the far side of the room, seated and presented with menus that are affixed to wooden planks.

The lank musician garners the attention of her stoic waiter.

GAIL
Can I move over to that table?

With a long index finger, she points to an empty table near the black couple. Peter claims her bowl of soup and walks it across the restaurant, trailing steam.

Presently, Gail picks up her tome, goes to her new seat, sits down and nods at the Asian fellow.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Thank you.

The waiter departs. Tucking her hair behind her ears, Gail pretends to read.

BLACK WOMAN
How come they put you at shortstop?

BLACK MAN
The coach is racist.

The lank musician's hopes dwindle.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - TWILIGHT

Dressed in a gray sweater and black slacks and sitting at the table near the door, Gail, healthier and better rested than before, watches noisy white BUSINESSMEN pour into the restaurant for happy hour. A frown bends her chin.

GAIL
These guys.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - NIGHT

Sitting at the same table, the lank musician reads a new book. FOOTFALLS resound in the front hall, and the woman looks up from 'Chapter XIX: Telluric Currents, Whistlers and Other Electrical Phenomena,' and sees an ASIAN FAMILY.

INT. ROOM 912 / MARITIME HOTEL - MORNING

An alarm clock BEEPS in the dark hotel room, rousing the lank musician, whose long limbs are tangled in a floral blanket.

She rolls onto her side and blindly reaches her hand toward the clock. After swatting the phone twice, she lifts her face from the mattress and opens her eyes, so that she can find her BEEPING foe.

Her stomach sinks.

Standing on the far side of the nightstand is Emmett, bald and wearing a turquoise hospital robe. He is staring directly at her.

GAIL
Emmett?

The clock BEEPS. With the palm of her left hand, she SLAPS the snooze bar. The BEEPING continues.

Emmett talks, but all that Gail can hear is the alarm.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Wait, wait-

The woman SLAPS the snooze bar, and the clock continues to BEEP, BEEP, BEEP. Blood drips from her right nostril, and the bald man, staring at her, speaks inaudibly.

Gail wipes her leaking nose and CLICKS off the alarm, which continues to BEEP, BEEP, BEEP. She yanks the cord from the wall, and something SCREECHES and EXPLODES.

A three-foot-wide black hole opens in the ceiling, and ice covers its perimeter. Exhaling steam and shivering, Gail climbs out of bed and looks into the orifice.

A huge eye fills the hole and looks directly at her.

The alarm BEEPS.

INT. ROOM 912 / MARITIME HOTEL - NOON

An alarm BEEPS. Gail awakens and SLAPS the snooze bar.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - AFTERNOON

Variegated fabrics swirl amidst suds on the far side of a circular washing machine window. Sitting opposite the THRUMMING centrifuge and wearing blue jeans and a gray sweater, Gail unfolds her cellphone, scrolls down the menu, highlights the name 'Fichman,' thumbs the call button and presses the device to her ear.

GAIL
I'm still not dead.
(she listens)
Not much since yesterday.
(she listens)
Arctic Char is definitely better than salmon. And it's a lot warmer today for some reason.
(she listens)
I have been. Actually, somebody hit on me yesterday, which is a real upgrade from being mistaken for a vagrant.
(she listens)
I don't know. Another week and then I'll ask Peter-
(she listens)
My waiter-- the one who plays banjo in a bluegrass group.
(she listens)
I'll give him my number and ask him to call me if somebody matching Bertrand's description comes into the restaurant.
(she listens)
Move on to plan B.
(she listens)
(MORE)

GAIL (CONT'D)
Join some therapy groups out here and try to find the organization the way Emmett did.

Fichman's voice BUZZES in the cellphone.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Don't get hysterical. They meet in public places-- it's as safe as-

The washer BEEPS.

INT. FRONT HALL / THE CATCH - TWILIGHT

Wearing a brown sweater, blue jeans, brown boots and her hair up in a knot, Gail walks toward the chipper Host.

HOST
Welcome back. Would you like a table out on the deck?-- the weather's quite amenable.

GAIL
I think I'd like my usual.

HOST
Very well. Follow me.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - SAME

Preceded by the redheaded fellow, the lank musician enters the dining room and surveys the enclosure, where BUSINESSMEN and OLDSTERS have gathered for drinks and early dinners. As Gail nears her usual spot, she glances at the glass doors on the west wall.

Her stomach sinks.

Lying upon one of the outside tables beside a bottle of mineral water is a yellow legal notepad.

The Host pulls out a chair for his customer, who stares outside, transfixed.

HOST
Are you reconsidering the deck?

GAIL
Yes.

Presently, Gail is led west by the chipper fellow. Through the glass, she sees the back of a short-haired BLACK MAN in a mocha suit who stands at the rail, looking out at the ocean, drinking a glass of water.

INT. DECK / THE CATCH - SAME

The Host opens a door, and the lank musician walks out onto the deck. At the table beside the one with the legal notepad sit an ELDERLY MAN and WOMAN, and next to them lies an empty chair that the chipper fellow withdraws for his guest.

HOST
Jennifer is the server outside--
unless you'd like to have Peter.

GAIL
I would.
(she sits)
If it isn't a problem?

HOST
Not at all.

The Host departs, and Gail glances at the back of the Black Man, who sets his glass of mineral water upon the wooden balustrade, CLACK.

The woman looks at her phone and sees that the time is four after six. Setting her book on the table, she opens it to a chapter entitled, 'Interstellar Radio Messages,' and turns to a page that has dense text.

A door swings open, throwing golden light across the deck, and a WAITER motions toward the Black Man.

WAITER
Mr. George is waiting for you right
over there.

Through the portal walks a wiry thirty-five-year-old fellow who has crewcut blonde hair, sunglasses, a crooked nose, thick lips, a gray cashmere sweater and blue slacks.

FELLOW WITH A CREWCUT
Mr. George?

The Black Man at the rail turns around. Excepting his hair, Alain Bertrand looks the same as he did when he met Emmett over four months ago.

In the margin of the book, Gail writes, 'Mr. George; black; 40ish; yellow legal pad; Bertrand???' and turns the page.

BERTRAND
Mr. Ferguson?

FELLOW WITH A CREWCUT
Lyle, please.

The men shake hands, and Gail writes, 'Lyle Ferguson; 35ish; blonde; buzzcut; looks like cartoon character,' and turns the page, covering her writing as her quarry and his guest sit.

BERTRAND
Would you please remove those-

Bertrand points an index finger at Lyle Ferguson's sunglasses, and the wiry man peels the plastic from his face, revealing two nervous, protuberant eyes. (In the margin, Gail scribbles, 'blue bug-eyes.')

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
There's nothing to worry about.

LYLE FERGUSON
It's been a long time since I haven't worried.

At the table in-between the men and their observer, the Elderly Woman clutches her purse, rises and helps her spouse to his feet.

BERTRAND
Order something to drink if you'd like.

LYLE FERGUSON
That's not against the rules?

BERTRAND
No. Relax.

The oldsters depart, and Gail sets her cellphone flat on the table, directly beside her thick book so that is it hidden from the men she observes. With nimble fingers, she links to a search engine, types in '"Lyle Ferguson" Seattle' and TAPS 'Go.' Arrows turn, chasing each other in a slow circuit.

A green ink koala bear sits upon the exposed nape of the TATTOOED WAITRESS who approaches Bertrand and Lyle Ferguson.

TATTOOED WAITRESS
I'm Jennifer, and I'll be your server this evening.

LYLE FERGUSON
Hi Jennifer. Do you have wine coolers?

TATTOOED WAITRESS
We don't, but we a local beer called Two-Headed Salmon that is very sweet.

LYLE FERGUSON
Okay.

TATTOOED WAITRESS
(to Bertrand)
Anything else for you?

BERTRAND
No thank you.

The waitress departs. Nearby, the lank musician watches the arrows of cogitation turn upon her cellphone.

LYLE FERGUSON
So it really works? Keith didn't get that specific.

BERTRAND
The treatment works.

Fury fills Gail, and for a moment, she is frozen with hatred. Tears sparkle in her eyes, and she does everything that she can to contain her emotions.

LYLE FERGUSON
But how does it work, exactly? I've always been like this.

BERTRAND
That isn't the type of thing that I will discuss with you at this time.

Nearby, the lank musician flips back in her book and circles the name, 'Bertrand.'

LYLE FERGUSON
Will I know before you start the treatment?

BERTRAND
Have you ever received penicillin?

LYLE FERGUSON
Sure. Why?

BERTRAND
You will understand the treatment about as well as you understand penicillin.

LYLE FERGUSON
Okay.

The Tattooed Waitress arrives and pours a beer for Lyle Ferguson. Anxious and fidgety, he looks away from his server and at the lank musician, the COUPLE beside her and the ASIAN FAMILY that sits beyond them, which is comprised of a mother, a father and two boys.

Gail watches her cellphone, hands shaking with suppressed anger. Presently, spinning arrows are replaced by blue words, and a cup of pretzels lands beside the device, placed there by Peter.

PETER
Shall I return in thirty?

GAIL
I'd like a martini. Filthy with five.

As the waiter nods his head, Bertrand glances at Gail and returns his attention to Lyle Ferguson, who wipes a mustache of suds from his upper lip.

LYLE FERGUSON
Keith said it worked for him and other people he knows. Though it's different-- what they wanted to fix.

BERTRAND
Generally speaking, the process is the same for everyone.

Nearby, Gail looks at her cellphone, which says in a bright blue letters, '258 Search results: "Lyle Ferguson" Seattle.' She scrolls down the page and reads the very first listing-- "Washington State Sex Offender Registry."

LYLE FERGUSON
I have the money ready, I just want to be sure it really works. That's reasonable, right?

BERTRAND
Certainly. Although you will have to pay a ten percent cancellation fee, you may leave the facility at any time during your orientation.

The wiry fellow relaxes.

LYLE FERGUSON
Oh. Good. Good.

Nearby, Gail opens the registry link and scrolls down the screen. Below a picture of Lyle Ferguson and his vital statistics, she reads--

"Tier: 2 (Moderate)
Offense: Endangering the Welfare of a Child
Victims: Under 13, Male."

Sickened by the information, the woman shuts her eyes.

Peter sets the dirty martini upon the corner of her table and departs. After Bertrand glances at the five olives floating in the drink, he returns his attention to Lyle Ferguson.

BERTRAND
Would you like to order?

LYLE FERGUSON
I'm starving. I hope there's a lot of popcorn shrimp in the platter.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - DUSK

Standing near the bar upon which her purse and the book sit, Gail surreptitiously turns the lens of her cellphone toward the glass doors and zooms in on Alain Bertrand, who is silhouetted by the glowing western sky and fuzzy. She taps the shutter button, and the device sounds an artificial CLICK at the exact moment that her blurry subject is obscured by the back of Lyle Ferguson's head.

Again, she aims her phone and takes a picture. The artificial shutter CLICKS, and the result is better, though still foggy.

INT. BATHROOM / THE CATCH - MOMENTS LATER

Wearing her purse (which holds the book) and dialing her phone, Gail walks into a bathroom that has salmon-colored tiles, three marble sinks and a trio of stalls. After an appraisal of the first two toilets, which are open, she walks into the final enclosure, where she closes and bolts the door, CLACK.

GAIL
(whispering)
Look in your inbox. The anonymous account.
(she listens)
In a bathroom.
(she listens)
Yes. That's Bertrand.
(she listens)
I'm sitting near him, so yes, he's seen me, but there's no reason to think he has any idea who I am.
(she listens)
The police aren't hauling somebody away for having a yellow notepad.
(she listens)
I'm going to get his license plate, call Chatterjee and tell him everything, get the I.R.S. involved.
(she listens)
When I'm done, I'll drive to the movie theater next to the hotel, park there and walk over, make sure nobody's following me.
(she listens)
I have been and will be. Thanks for worrying, but don't worry.
(she listens)
I thought you were Jewish.
(she listens)
Didn't realize they meant the same thing. I'll call you at midnight. Bye.

The woman TAPS the disconnect button and looks at the blurry image of Bertrand upon her phone.

GAIL (CONT'D)
You’re going to jail forever, you fucking creep.

EXT. DECK / THE CATCH RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Gail walks onto the deck and glances at her quarry. Into the hands of the Tattooed Waitress, Bertrand places a closed wooden billfold.

BERTRAND
I don’t require any change.

TATTOOED WAITRESS
Thank you Mr. George.

Without hesitation, the lank musician turns around and reenters the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM / THE CATCH - SAME

Gail hastens across the Terracotta tiles toward the exit.

GAIL
(muttered)
Shit, shit, shit.

At the lectern, the chipper Host turns around, sees the careening woman and grows concerned.

HOST
Mrs. Smith? Is everything-

GAIL
Tell Peter I’ll be back. Just need to go out for a sec.

EXT. PARKING LOT / THE CATCH - SAME

Moths orbit the BUZZING halogen lamps that illuminate the gravel parking lot. The restaurant door opens, and Gail walks outside, dials her phone to its camera setting, points it toward the farthest cars, zooms in and starts taking pictures, each of which contains two or three bumpers. Artificial CLICKS resonate like distant gunfire.

The images that she gathers are canted, grainy and blurry, yet contain (mostly) legible license plates. Without slowing her strides, she takes pictures of the remaining cars, excepting those that are backed into their spaces.

Gail glances at the restaurant entrance and proceeds to her own red vehicle, which is ten feet away. Her book slips from under her arm and SMACKS upon the ground.

As she leans over to pick it up, the front door opens.

Lyle Ferguson emerges from the restaurant, and Gail, seeing him, hastens between two parked cars. Kneeling, she looks through the window of the blue sedan on her right.

The child molester walks directly toward her.

Gail ducks below the glass, sets her book on the ground and draws her utility tool out of her pocket.

Rocks CRUNCH underneath Lyle Ferguson's loafers. The distance between him and his hidden observer is less than twenty feet.

The blade of the utility tool CLICKS into place, its point unsteady in the woman's trembling left hand. FOOTFALLS grow louder. For a few slow seconds, Gail sweats, fearful yet resolved and in control.

A shadow blocks out the halogen light, covering the musician and her sharp weapon. A moment later, the darkness passes.

Keys JINGLE in Lyle Ferguson's hand as he opens the door of a yellow car several spaces away, and Gail exhales, shuddering.

Seated, the child molester closes his vehicle, CLICKS on his headlights, shifts gears and drives from his space toward the incline that leads to the main road.

INT. RED SPORTS CAR - SAME

Gail climbs into her car and shuts the door. As she sets her tool upon the dashboard, the front door of the restaurant opens, admitting Bertrand.

The woman watches her quarry walk toward the far side of the parking lot, keys glinting in his right hand, his hard-soled shoes CRACKING gravel. Presently, he reaches a brown sedan, which is backed into a space so that the bushes on the far side cover over its license plate. The woman activates her camera and zooms in on the car's front bumper.

The sedan's engine PURRS. Headlights glare, and the vehicle glides forward. Bertrand cuts the wheel to his left, and tires spin across Gail's viewfinder. She sees the rear bumper and TAPS the screen. The shutter CLICKS, capturing the vehicle's license plate.

GAIL
Got you.

Bertrand steers toward the incline that leads up to the main road, and Gail opens her email account, taps 'Compose' and selects the function, 'Attach a Photo.'

INT. RED SPORTS CAR - LATER

Holding her cellphone to her left ear, the lank musician drives east upon a four-lane avenue that bisects a lighted metropolitan area.

GAIL
Hey, Chatterjee-- it's Gail. Call me when you get this-- I have some information about Bertrand.

She TAPS the disconnect button and puts the device in her purse. Scanning the buildings on the left side of the road, she descries her target and flips her turn signal down. A red arrow blinks on her dashboard, CLICKING, and she slows, spinning the wheel counterclockwise.

Car headlights lance through the passenger window as Gail accelerates across the street into safety. She glances at her rearview mirror and does not see any followers.

Presently, she drives into the half-filled parking lot of a multiplex movie theater that plays, 'The Case,' 'The Catch,' 'The Defendant,' 'The House,' 'The Idea,' 'Leaving,' 'Looter,' 'Sniper' and 'Spies.'

Past a group of Asian TEENS who smoke things that might be cigarettes, the woman steers her car. Once she enters an empty area, she brakes and backs into a space where her license plate will be concealed by bushes.

EXT. MULTIPLEX PARKING LOT - SAME

Gail exits the car and closes the door, which she then locks. For a moment, she surveys the immediate area.

The lot is still, excepting a few pedestrians and a black sports car that has silver rims and bright blue lights, which slides into a space near the sidewalk. Gail looks at the front of the movie theater, which is ninety feet away, and returns her attention to the newly-arrived vehicle, which is much closer.

She dials, '911,' but does not press the 'Call' button.

The blue headlights die, and the front door opens. Out of the driver's side steps an AWKWARD TEEN, who is soon joined by his passenger, a CHUBBY GIRL of the same age.

Gail relaxes, clears '911' from her screen and walks toward the highway sidewalk, circumventing the youths as they study the multiplex sign.

CHUBBY GIRL
Didn't 'Sniper' come out already?

AWKWARD TEEN
That was '<u>The</u> Sniper.'

Twenty feet away, the woman nears the edge of the lot.

CHUBBY GIRL
I thought ‘The Sniper’ was with Thad Warren.

AWKWARD TEEN
That was ‘Snipers’ with an ‘s.’

EXT. FEDERAL AVENUE - SAME

The lank musician strides onto the sidewalk. After a glance over her shoulder, she continues east, toward the glowing blue ‘Maritime Hotel’ sign. Cars WHOOSH past on the adjacent avenue, headlights glaring.

EXT. FRONT DRIVE / MARITIME HOTEL - SAME

Gail walks across concrete slabs that are engraved with the initials M.H. Eyes alert, she proceeds past two parked cabs, toward the front entrance.

INT. LOBBY / MARITIME HOTEL - SAME

Sliding doors retract into the walls and admit Gail, who surveys the carpeted, white-and-blue lobby for anomalous individuals, but sees only two CLERKS behind a wooden desk and a COUPLE seated on the corner of an L-shaped couch, engaged in close conversation and sharing drinks.

To the elevator bank, she proceeds. There, she pokes an arrow that points up, and a light directly beside her head illuminates, BING-BING. The door opens, revealing an empty blue enclosure.

INT. ELEVATOR / MARITIME HOTEL - SAME

Gail walks into the elevator and presses a button marked, ‘9.’ A moment after the door closes, she withdraws her phone.

Upon the wall, the display shows the numbers, 2, 3, 4...

The woman highlights the name, ‘Clayton Chatterjee,’ and presses the ‘Call’ button, which is replaced by the flashing phrase, ‘Now Connecting...”

The wall display reads, 7, 8 and 9. A light flashes, accompanied by a chime, BING-BING.

Gail presses the phone to her ear, and the elevator door slides open.

INT. NINTH FLOOR HALL / MARITIME HOTEL - SAME

The woman pokes her head into the hallway, looks in both directions, sees that is empty and proceeds toward her room.

Wary, she looks over her shoulder. The elevator closes, and the door to room 902 is opened by a HEAVY MAN who has a beard, thick glasses, tan slacks and a brown coat.

Uneasy, Gail hastens forward, a voice BUZZING in her phone.

GAIL
Wait one sec.

With a shaking hand, the woman slots her key card. A green light flashes, BEEP, and the door unlocks, CLACK. She looks over her shoulder. The Heavy Man is still at the elevator.

INT. ROOM 912 / MARITIME HOTEL - SAME

Gail hastens into the dark room, shuts the door, twists the bolt and reaches for the light switch. Upon her hand shine three small triangles that are red, green and blue.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Be still and-

She turns around and grabs the doorknob. Something CLICKS. Upon her nape, the colored triangles merge and become one bright white triangle. The woman YELLS, convulses, SMACKS her forehead against the wall and falls to the ground.

A switch CLICKS. Light blossoms from a table lamp, illuminating the room and Alain Bertrand, who is now bald and wearing a tan suit. Held in his left hand is a black, egg-shaped device that has three triangular holes in its tapered front end. Stunned and in pain, the prone woman stares at the man who was her quarry.

BERTRAND
Remain calm.

Near her elbow, the fallen cellphone shows the name ‘Clayton Chatterjee’ and resonates with his BUZZING voice. Bertrand sees the device, and Gail leans to its mouthpiece.

GAIL
Bertrand is in my room!

The woman grabs her cellphone and flings it as hard as she can at the bathroom wall, where it SHATTERS against the tile.

A heavy boot presses into her neck, pinning her to the ground, and Bertrand points his black egg. Red, blue and green triangles glow upon her chin, converge and turn white. Agonized, she convulses and loses consciousness.

Darkness expands.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

Gail opens her eyes, and her pupils constrict, reacting to the bright overhead lights. Squinting, the confused woman looks around and sees that she is in the middle of a windowless beige room, lying atop a bed of the same color and wearing a turquoise hospital robe. Stuck in her left arm is the needle of an intravenous line that dangles from a hole in the ceiling.

The woman touches the triangular mark upon her chin, and recalls her abduction; her scattered thoughts coalesce.

Fabric CRINKLES. Gail sits up, raises the hem of her hospital gown and sees that she is wearing a diaper.

Somebody KNOCKS, startling her. Weak and nauseated, she looks at the door, which is one of two in the room.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (O.S.)
May I come in?

Gail pulls her gown to her knees and attempts to reply, but produces only a reptilian CROAK.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
There is water behind you.

The mute musician turns around, sees a cubby in the wall that contains three plastic water bottles and claims one of them. After three large GULPS, she clears her throat.

WOMAN WITH ACCENT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
May I come in?

Gail RIPS the tape from her arm, withdraws the intravenous needle and tosses it aside.

GAIL
(hoarse)
Come in.

A lock CLACKS, and the door swings wide. Into the room walks YALDA, a tall and striking thirty-one-year-old Pakistani woman with fair skin, a prominent nose, diagonal eyebrows, big almond-shaped eyes, short hair and a mocha pantsuit.

YALDA
My name is Yalda.
(she closes the door)
I am in charge of your orientation.

GAIL
(hoarse)
Where the fu-
(she COUGHS)
Where am I?

The Pakistani woman glances at the needle, which swings pendulously on the intravenous line, and returns her attention to her charge.

YALDA
Are you ready to begin your orientation?

GAIL
“Orientation?”
(she drinks water)
I was kidnapped.

YALDA
Are you ready to begin your orientation?

GAIL
Do I have other options?

YALDA
Such as?

GAIL
Leaving?

YALDA
No.

GAIL
Making a phone call?

YALDA
No.

Gail swallows water and clears her throat.

GAIL
So orient.

Ten feet from the foot of the bed, Yalda sits on a brown chair, leans back and folds her hands.

YALDA
Would you like to tell me your real name?

GAIL
Not especially.

YALDA
Should I call you Gail Smith? Or would you prefer another name?

GAIL
That one’s fine.

The Pakistani woman withdraws a black egg from her jacket and point its tapered end at the lank musician.

YALDA
This is a pain stimulator. Do you recall-

GAIL
Vividly.

YALDA
I have no interest in giving you a dose, but if you make any hasty movements, I shall have no alternative but to fire. Do you understand?

GAIL
Yes.

YALDA
Very well. The first things you should know is that you have been here, inside the facility, for thirty-eight days.

Gail is sickened and infuriated by the information.

YALDA (CONT'D)
Although you were bathed and shaved throughout this period, your fingernails were not clipped so that you might better apprehend the passage of time.

The lank musician looks down. Her nails now extend well beyond the edges of her fingertips.

YALDA (CONT'D)
The nails on your right hand grew three point eight millimeters and the ones on your left hand grew four millimeters, which is a typical discrepancy for a left-handed person.

Gail eyes Yalda.

GAIL
What do you want from me?

YALDA
The great majority of people who enter our facility do so willingly and are free to come and go as they please. But a person like you--a threat--has two options.

GAIL
What are they?

YALDA
You can undergo the treatment, which will en-

GAIL
Not interested in brainwashing.

YALDA
We do not brainwash people.

GAIL
What's the other option?

YALDA
We will reset your mind to its prenatal state.

Gail lunges at Yalda.

In a fraction of a second, red, green and blue triangles shine upon the lank musician's neck, converge and become white. Gail YELLS and falls onto her back.

YALDA (CONT'D)
An attendant will bring you solid food and clean underwear.

Yalda rises from her chair, walks to the exit and pauses.

YALDA (CONT'D)
It is important for you to understand that you cannot escape the facility and will not ever be rescued. If you want to survive, you will need to open up your mind.

The Pakistani woman exits and closes the door. A bolt locks, CLACK, and the intravenous line ZIPS through the air, sucked into the ceiling like a piece of spaghetti.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

A door opens. Inside the green bathroom stands Gail, wearing a turquoise hospital gown and clasping the handles of a rolling walker. Presently, she looks at her bed, which is twenty feet away, and begins her slow journey forward, her arms and legs trembling.

The walker's wheels turn as slowly as a second hand turns upon the face of a clock.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The bathroom door opens, and Gail emerges, employing a walking frame. With steady arms and legs, she travels across the beige carpet toward her bed.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The bathroom door opens. Using a cane, Gail enters the windowless enclosure.

On the brown chair near the foot of the bed sits Yalda, dressed in a black pant suit and holding a large book.

YALDA
You are recovering quickly.

GAIL
Thanks for the challenge.

The Pakistani woman admits a grin that the lank musician does not reciprocate.

YALDA
Are you interested in going through the treatment?

GAIL
You ask that as if there's a choice.

YALDA
I brought you something to read.

Presently, Gail reaches the bed and sits down. Upon the beige blanket, Yalda places the tome, which is entitled, 'M-Theory: Our Subatomic Quilt.'

YALDA (CONT'D)
Are you familiar with string theory?

GAIL
I play the violin.

Almost immediately, the lank musician regrets her divulgence.

YALDA
String theory explains--or attempts to explain--the behavior of fundamental particles, which are the very smallest units of matter in existence.
(she TAPS the book)
M-Theory is a combination of various string theories into something larger and more cohesive.

GAIL
This stuff has to do with the treatment?

YALDA
It does.

Gail looks at the tome and sees thirty yellow note cards poking out of its top.

YALDA (CONT'D)
I marked the most important sections.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

Abed, hale and wearing a turquoise shirt and matching pants, the lank musician reads ‘M-Theory: Our Subatomic Quilt.’ Somebody KNOCKS.

YALDA (O.S.)
May I come in?

GAIL
Fine.

The bolt CLACKS. Gail slides a yellow note card into the book as Yalda enters the room, holding a black egg.

YALDA
Are you feeling well?

GAIL
I don’t need the cane anymore.

For a long moment, the Pakistani woman appraises her charge.

YALDA
Dr. Howard would like to meet you.

The lank musician feels a chill.

GAIL
Already?

YALDA
There is nothing to be worried about-- this is only a preliminary consultation.

GAIL
Okay.

Acutely uncomfortable, Gail rises from her bed, pulls turquoise slippers over her feet and approaches Yalda, who motions toward the open door.

YALDA
Please precede me into the hall.

Glancing at the Pakistani woman’s pain stimulator, the lank musician walks through the portal.

INT. LONG BEIGE HALLWAY / THE FACILITY - SAME

Gail enters a windowless beige hallway. Standing ahead of her is BRETT, a sizable white man of thirty who has a shaved head, a flat face, a white hospital uniform and a black egg in his right hand.

YALDA
Please follow after Brett.

The attendant turns around and walks up the passageway. Observing her surroundings, Gail follows, succeeded by Yalda.

Presently, they reach the end of the hall, where the Pakistani woman presses her right hand to a black panel that is directly by an elevator.

YALDA (CONT'D)
Y eight four.

A light turns green, and the lift CHIRPS and opens, revealing a tan, cylindrical enclosure that has a curved wooden rail at waist level.

INT. ELEVATOR / THE FACILITY - SAME

The trio enters the elevator, and it closes. Leaning against the door, the attendant eyes his assignment.

BRETT
Grab the rail.

Gail holds the wooden bannister, and Yalda rests her palm upon another black panel.

YALDA
Y eight four. Consultation room D.

A green light shines, and the enclosure CHIRPS and sinks. Unbalanced, the patient tightens her grip upon the bannister.

Presently, the elevator CHIRPS, RATTLES and stops. The door slides open, and the attendant exits, motioning for the women to follow after him.

INT. TAN HALL / THE FACILITY - SAME

Gail enters a tan passageway, followed by Yalda. Ahead of them, Brett reaches a wooden door, which he opens.

INT. WAITING ROOM / THE FACILITY - SAME

The women enter a room that has mocha carpeting, brown wallpaper, four beige couches, two tables and a pair standing lamps. On the far wall are five doors, one of which opens, revealing DR. HOWARD, a short black man of fifty, who has glasses, receding silver hair, kind eyes and a teal suit.

DR. HOWARD
(Georgia accent)
Mrs. Smith?

The lank musician looks at the diminutive fellow.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
I'm Dr. Howard. Great to meet you!
Please join me in my office.

He makes a spectacular gesture at his open door.

INT. DR. HOWARD'S OFFICE / THE FACILITY - SAME

Gail enters the office, which has wood panelling, a shag carpet, an aquarium and pictures of the short fellow enjoying amusement park rides and Christmas gifts with his spouse and bright progeny. Presently, Dr. Howard pats a cushioned chair as if it were a faithful dog's head.

DR. HOWARD
Right here. Get yourself comfortable.

The woman sits, and her host circumnavigates his vast desk and plants his buttocks on a leather recliner that SQUEAKS.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Want a drink? Some gum? I've got sushi in my mini-fridge if you're into that.

GAIL
What kind of doctor are you?

DR. HOWARD
Physician. What do you think of Yalda?

Gail shrugs.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
That's better than my review.
(he grins)
A lot of women who look like that are distanced--if not corrupted--by the favors and attention they get during their formative years because of the genetic coincidence we call beauty. Yalda's been breathing different air her whole life-- and I'm not just saying that because I'm a little black shrimp.
(a thought occurs to him)
I hope you don't take this as a slight-- you're fetching.

GAIL
Don't worry about it.

DR. HOWARD
So what do you know about the treatment?

GAIL
Nothing good.

DR. HOWARD
I understand why you think that. You probably believe we're a cult that brainwashes people or swindles them--or both--but please allow me to tell you what we actually do.
(he presses his palms together and leans forward)
We repair people. That's what we do here. We fix people who're broken so that they can go on and enjoy their lives.

GAIL
Broken how?

DR. HOWARD
A lot of our clients are people who have experienced debilitating traumas. A soldier who accidentally killed his close friend in combat maneuver. A victim of rape. A person who lost a spouse or child.

GAIL
A child molester.

DR. HOWARD
Yes. A person who has a sexual predilection for children may be repaired, as well a person who has homicidal tendencies or schizophrenia.

GAIL
Through hypnosis? Mind control?

DR. HOWARD
No. We have a machine that can map a person's brain, isolate affected regions and alter them.

GAIL
You perform lobotomies?

Dr. Howard CACKLES like a child.

DR. HOWARD
You're great!
(he stands up)
I'm gonna get that sushi.

The little fellow walks over to his littler refrigerator, withdraws a wooden bento box and closes the door. After setting the platter on his vast desk, he removes its lid, revealing a dozen pieces of brightly colored sushi.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Nigiri?

GAIL
No thanks.

DR. HOWARD
The yellowtail's noteworthy.

GAIL
No thanks.

Dr. Howard puts a chunk of wasabi into a little dish, waters it with soy sauce, picks up a piece of tuna, touches it to the pasty mixture and eats the dripping nigiri in one bite.

DR. HOWARD
Did you look at that book on M-Theory?

GAIL
Some.

DR. HOWARD
That's the level we're working at--subatomic. A little more advanced than "electroshock therapy."
(he grins)
We manipulate fundamental particles, which are the very smallest components of matter in existence.
(he eats a piece of sushi)
In our four-dimensional reality, these particles look like dots and have lots of different names--quarks, leptons, bosons--but in the larger eleven-dimensional reality, these particles are all the exact same thing-- a cosmic string. The only reason that they look different to us in our reality is because the string is vibrating.

GAIL
Inside the other dimensions we can't see.

DR. HOWARD
You did read some.

GAIL
How do you manipulate strings that are smaller than an atom?

DR. HOWARD
Our machine tunes them like guitar strings, using things we call sonic photons.
(MORE)

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
When it raises or lowers the pitch, it changes how the cosmic string functions in our reality, which changes what kind of dot it is, even though in eleven dimensions it's still the same thing.
(he eats a piece of sushi)
Understand?

GAIL
Almost sort of.

DR. HOWARD
Good enough! The end result is that a tiny, tiny, tiny portion of the brain is rewritten at a subatomic level.

GAIL
You erase a person's memories?

DR. HOWARD
Very rarely. I still remember the horrible stuff that happened to my first daughter, but the treatment enabled me to move on, remarry and have them-

The diminutive fellow gestures at the photographs on the wall. After a brief appraisal of the happy children, the woman returns her gaze to the physician.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
The treatment didn't erase my memories of what happened to Tara, it just rewrote some of my emotional responses so that I could enjoy my life again, which I wasn't able to do on my own. And it's a lot better than using Prozac or lithium or some other medication that'll affect everything and change who you are.
(he waters more wasabi)
Our treatment targets and alters one specific thing and leaves the rest alone.

Dr. Howard selects a piece of yellowtail and eats it.

GAIL
If something like this exists, why's it a secret?

DR. HOWARD
We find the people who need it. And really, would you want our government--or how about that one in North Korea?--to have the ability to rewrite a person's mind?
(MORE)

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Change the behavioral patterns that they didn't care for?

Gail has no ready response.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
I understand that this is a lot to absorb, but it's true and has been happening for over two decades.
(he presses his hands together)
We repair people.

An unhappy thought darkens the woman's face.

GAIL
You don't repair everyone.

DR. HOWARD
Then let me qualify that-- all of the people who approach us in an honest manner are repaired.

Gail contemplates a response, but keeps her mouth shut.

A light blinks on the desk.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Somebody's waiting for you outside.

Dr. Howard stands up and walks to the door, which he opens.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
I can help you use the treatment to get rid of your grudge-- rewrite the part of your brain that won't accept us. It's a pretty simple process if you go along with everything.

Her mind full of conflicting thoughts, Gail rises from her chair and looks at the little physician.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
We'll start tomorrow.

INT. WAITING ROOM / THE FACILITY - SAME

The woman walks into the carpeted waiting room and stops when she sees her visitor. Standing beside a couch is Alain Bertrand, bald and wearing a tan suit.

GAIL
How's your brother? Or is he a clone from the eleventh dimension?

A smile cracks Bertrand's face.

BERTRAND
He’s my brother.

GAIL
What do you want?

BERTRAND
I came here to apologize to you.

Suspicious, Gail awaits more dubious words.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
Except for his first name, Emmett did not tell us anything that we believe to be true, though we knew that he was an agent for some branch of the government. So when you started going to the restaurant, our assumption was that you were also an agent.
(he shakes his head)
You’re his wife, aren’t you?

The lank musician does not respond, and the recruiter looks away, regretful.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
We strive to help people transcend their tragedies, but in this instance, we’ve created one.
(he looks at Gail)
Did you and he lose a child at some point? His performance was very believable.

Gail wipes tears from her eyes.

GAIL
Then let me go and help my husband if you’re so goddamn sorry.

BERTRAND
I wish that we could. But we cannot risk everything for one or two individuals. We have repaired thousands of people in the last two decades. The man whom you saw my brother meet at The Catch-

GAIL
The child molester.

BERTRAND
We have repaired six hundred and eighty-four men who have that sexual deviation-- men who came to us willingly, who wanted to change themselves. Do you know how many innocent children are saved as a result of just this one aspect of what we do?
(MORE)

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
(he shakes his head)
But I came to apologize to you, not get didactic. I am very, very sorry that you are here-- it is a mistake and you are an innocent victim. Our choices are limited, but this situation is regrettable beyond words.

The lank musician neither refuses nor accepts the apology.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
I will take you to your room so that you may have some privacy.

After withdrawing a black egg, Bertrand escorts Gail toward the hall.

Ahead of them, the door opens, revealing a TALL PALE MAN who has a silver beard, big eyebrows, a gray doctor's smock and bumps on the top of his bald head. The lank musician shudders as she walks past the weird, inscrutable fellow.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The lank musician sits on the rolling chair, staring at the open M-Theory book. After reading the same sentence several times, she looks up and rubs her eyes, preoccupied by her strange dilemma.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The lights are off, excepting a runway of small green bulbs that are embedded in the floor in-between the bathroom door and the bed. Asleep underneath a beige blanket, the woman rolls onto her back, restless.

INT. RECITAL HALL - NIGHT

Dressed in black and sitting on chairs upon the stage of a small recital hall, Gail, Fichman, Lysa and Ken play their stringed instruments in front of ninety PEOPLE. The musicians reach their final harmony, pause and raise their bows. Vibrating strings grow still and silent.

Presently, the audience APPLAUDS.

Gail surveys the appreciative crowd. Seated in the front row are Clayton Chatterjee, his wife LAVANYA and Emmett.

The lank brunette looks at her CLAPPING husband, and he mouths the word, 'Awesome!' to her. She smiles.

INT. ELEVATOR / THE FACILITY - LATER

Brett frowns and leans against the elevator door opposite Gail, who wears new turquoise hospital clothes. Dressed in a blue plaid suit, Dr. Howard presses his right palm to the black panel.

DR. HOWARD
H two four. Veranda B.

After a green light flashes, the elevator CHIRPS and rises.

GAIL
The book says that scientists still haven't proven any of this stuff about string theory, much less created machines that can alter how the cosmic strings vibrate.

DR. HOWARD
Is there a question in there?
(he grins)
An accusation?

GAIL
Science isn't advanced enough to do what you said. And I know to what extent doctors can view a live human brain-- it's in millimeters, not molecules or subatomic particles.

DR. HOWARD
I can't explain exactly how The Scrivener works-- I just know that it does.

GAIL
Who made it?

DR. HOWARD
I don't know.

Gail frowns. The elevator slows, stops, CHIRPS and opens. The sounds of CONVERSATIONS and LAUGHTER fill the enclosure.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
I want you to see this before we go down-- might help you relax some.

INT. VERANDA B / THE FACILITY - SAME

The trio enters a hallway that has sky blue walls and a royal blue rug. Brett walks toward a water fountain, and Dr. Howard escorts Gail to a window.

DR. HOWARD
These people are in recovery.

Through the glass, the lank musician sees a score of PEOPLE who are dressed in street clothes, talking, LAUGHING, swinging ping-pong paddles, poking pool cues and rolling bocce balls.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Lots of sore cheeks in there-- some of these folks haven't smiled in years.

Gail observes a WOMAN whom she vaguely resembles. The lank redhead SMACKS a ping-pong ball, and her opponent, a large HEAVYSET MAN, swings and misses.

HEAVYSET MAN
Merde.

WOMAN
I gagner cette fois.

HEAVYSET MAN
Femme modeste.

Dr. Howard studies his patient.

DR. HOWARD
Are you gonna work with us to clear everything up?

GAIL
Seems like the only thing I can do.

DR. HOWARD
That's terrific! Once we've verified you're not a threat--we have a foolproof test for this-- you'll be given your street clothes and allowed to socialize.

In the game room, a bearded JAPANESE MAN flings a bocce ball, which lands in the sand far from the jack. The incredulous fellow throws his hands in the air.

JAPANESE MAN
Nani!?!

INT. ELEVATOR / THE FACILITY - MOMENTS LATER

Gail and Brett enter the elevator, followed by Dr. Howard, who presses his right palm to the scanner.

DR. TSANG
H two four. The Scrivener.

A green light flashes, and the elevator CHIRPS and sinks. The little physician puts a piece of gum in his mouth, chews thrice and looks at the lank musician.

DR. HOWARD
Your ears might pop.
(he chews)
It’s a ways.

The elevator shakes, and the woman nods.

GAIL
I feel it.

She GULPS air, compensating for the change in pressure.

A few moments later, the elevator shakes, slows, winks its green light and CHIRPS. The door opens, revealing a sight that sends a chill down Gail’s spine.

Directly outside the lift is a subterranean cave.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Wrong floor?

DR. HOWARD
Nope.

Brett disembarks, a black egg in his right hand, and Dr. Howard gestures outside.

INT. SUBTERRANEAN CAVE / THE FACILITY - SAME

Gail walks into a cavern that is lighted by a line of dim white bulbs in its ceiling, and her eyes dilate. Presently, the little physician joins his patient.

DR. HOWARD
Gum?

GAIL
No thank you.

The elevator CHIRPS and closes.

DR. HOWARD
It’s strawberry cream. My girls love it.

GAIL
No thank you.

Along the subterranean cavern, the trio proceeds. Questions arise and multiply in the woman’s mind.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Did the founders of your group build The Scrivener or find it?

DR. HOWARD
I don’t know much of its origins.

Rubber soles SQUEAK like vermin upon the floor mat. At the vanguard, Brett disappears behind a sharp bend.

GAIL
But nobody would make something like The Scrivener and choose to put in an underground cave.

Dr. Howard shrugs.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Right?

DR. HOWARD
A long time ago, I wanted to know more about its origins, but now I just accept it, grateful for what it can do.

They round the corner, and the woman GASPS, stunned by what she sees.

INT. DOME OF THE SCRIVENER / THE FACILITY - SAME

Gail stands at the entrance of a floodlight-illuminated subterranean dome that is four thousand feet across and three thousand feet high. The lenses of hundreds of video cameras glimmer throughout the cyclopean space, except on the far side where two narrow gray buildings lean against the wall.

DR. HOWARD
Let’s keep going-- we don’t have that much time before the next patient comes down.

Confused and anxious, Gail walks forward and YELPS. She leaps back and looks at the floor, which is made of a malleable, purplish-black substance.

GAIL
What is this?

DR. HOWARD
Subterranean sponge. It’s harmless- I’ve even let my girls play down here.
(he motions ahead)
Please-

Gail sees Brett’s trail of footprints and follows after him.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Let me tell you exactly what’s happening today, all right?

Walking past a tripod-mounted video camera that points at the ceiling, the woman nods her head.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
We're installing something that The Scrivener uses to map your mind-- a guidepost that helps it like how dye helps get an x-ray machine get clearer images.

An unhappy memory involving Emmett's time in the hospital returns to Gail.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
It goes in your auditory cortex-- the part of your brain that deals with hearing.

Twenty feet away, Brett stops in front of a metal chain that connects a dozen steel stanchions. As Gail draws near him, she sees what lies in the cordoned-off area: A rectangular cranny that is twelve feet long, five feet across and two feet deep. When she sees the mattress and pillow that lie inside the depression, she starts to tremble uncontrollably.

GAIL
I can't.
(she looks at the doctor)
I- I- I can't do this.

DR. HOWARD
Of course you can. It's perfectly-

GAIL
It- it looks like a grave. And this place...whatever it is...

Terrified and shaking, Gail backs away from the cranny.

Brett aims his black egg. Three triangles--one red, one green and one blue--shine upon her neck. The woman looks at the little physician and shakes her head.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Please don't make me. I- I won't tell anybody what you do here, just-

DR. HOWARD
Mrs. Smith. Gail.
(he SIGHS)
I didn't want to say this, but I guess I need to be blunt about your predicament. A lot of people in our group don't want to try and save you-- the man you know as Bertrand, his brother and I had to fight to get you this opportunity.
(he shakes his head)
If you don't proceed with the treatment right now...that's it.

Horrified, Gail stares at Dr. Howard, whose expressive face shows sadness and concern.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
(quietly)
You understand what I'm saying?

The lank musician clasps her trembling hands together and nods her head. For a moment, the two men observe her.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Let me show you something pretty.

Dr. Howard unhooks a chain from a stanchion and walks to the edge of the cranny. Gail watches, shaking, monitored by Brett, who has lowered his black egg.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
I've got the guideposts in my head--
like everyone who's been treated.

The small man sits upon the mattress and leans back. The moment that his head drops below the edge of the cranny, bright light blossoms throughout chamber. Gail squints.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Look up.

The woman raises her gaze. Floating in the air above her and spanning most of four-thousand-foot-wide chamber are webs of white, yellow and blue lightning that define an ever-evolving oblate sphere.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
That's what thinking looks like.

At the massive thoughts, Gail stares.

Dr. Howard leans forward. The cerebral maelstrom vanishes at the exact moment that his head rises above the edge of the cranny.

Bright afterimages aglow in her eyes, the woman blinks.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Once you have your guideposts in,
you'll be able to make your own
Fourth of July.
(he climbs out of the
cranny)
Come on over.

The lank musician walks past the stanchions and approaches the little physician. With both hands, he gestures to the opening that lies just beyond the tips of his loafers.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Have a seat.

Anxious, Gail steps into the depression, sits on the foam mattress and glances at the sides of the cranny, which are covered with purplish-black sponge and crimson gems.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Lie down.

Gail looks at Dr. Howard, who kneels beside her, takes her right hand and squeezes it.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
It’s okay. I promise you.

Slowly, the woman lies down.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
It’s going to overstimulate your auditory cortex through you ears.

A loud BEEP resounds throughout the chamber.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Close your eyes, hold your breath and listen!

The BEEP continues. Gail shuts her eyes and mouth and listens. A moment later, her entire body jerks.

The BEEP stops, and the woman looks up at the doctor.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
It’s done.

‘It’s done,” echoes.

GAIL
What?

“What?” echoes.

DR. HOWARD
Sit up.

“Sit up,” echoes.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
I forgot to tell you-

“I forgot to tell you,” echoes.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
The guidepost causes a delay-

“The guidepost causes a delay,” echoes.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
-until your brain adjusts-

“Until your brain adjusts-” echoes.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
-to the new neural pathway.

“To the new neural pathway,” echoes.

GAIL
This sucks.

“This sucks,” echoes.

DR. HOWARD
It only lasts half a day.

“It only lasts half a day,” echoes. The lank musician shakes her head in refutation.

GAIL
My brain’s pretty stubborn.

Dr. Howard LAUGHS. “My brain’s pretty stubborn,” echoes. LAUGHTER echoes. Gail flinches at the overlapping cacophony.

GAIL (CONT'D)
I think I’ll do some reading tonight.

She hears, “I think I’ll do-”

GAIL (CONT'D)
Oh shut up.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The lank musician wakes up and looks at the hall door. Presently, she hears a delayed FOOTSTEP followed by the sound of the door closing, THUNK.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

Gail eats eggs from a plastic tray. After finishing the last bite, she puts the tray into her cubby and SNAPS her fingers. There is no longer any echo.

Upon the thin rug beside the bed, she sees several stains that appear to be footprints. Her brow wrinkles.

INT. DOME OF THE SCRIVENER / THE FACILITY - LATER

Dressed in new turquoise hospital clothes and sitting in the two-foot deep, five-by-twelve cranny that is at the center of the underground chamber, the lank musician looks at the small physician, who stands nearby, flanked by the attendant.

DR. HOWARD
The moment you lie down, The Scrivener will detect the first guidepost and know to install the second. It’s gonna overstimulate your occipital lobe through your eyes, so try not look away.

A thought occurs to Gail.

GAIL
And is there one more after this--
a third guidepost that goes in the
somatosensory cortex?

Surprised, Dr. Howard appraises his patient.

DR. HOWARD
How'd you know that?

GAIL
A hunch.

DR. HOWARD
That "hunch" is correct!
(he motions to the
mattress)
Please...

Gail lies down. In the dome overhead, neat rows of glowing red discs appear, pulsating in perfect time with her heart--bright-dim, bright-dim, bright-dim.

Gradually, the flashing lights become asynchronous and fragmented. The supine woman watches the glaring stroboscopic display, squinting and uncomfortable, straining to keep her eyes open.

Her body jerks, and the discs vanish.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
It's done.

Gail looks from the dark dome to Dr. Howard, who puts a piece of yellow gum in his mouth.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Piña colada? My girls love this
stuff.

Gail looks from the dark dome to Dr. Howard, who puts a piece of yellow gum in his mouth.

GAIL (O.S.)
No thanks.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.)
You can sit up now.

Gail leans forward and rests her hands upon her knees.

Dr. Howard silently mouths the words, "You can sit up now."

Gail leans forward and rests her hands upon her knees. Suddenly, she is clasping her legs, wobbling.

GAIL
I think I'm hallucinating.

The physician nods his head, blowing a bubble. Something POPS, as the physician nods his head, blowing a bubble. Suddenly the yellow sphere is gone, and he is chewing.

DR. HOWARD
Visual echoes are pretty common. Move slowly so you don't get too far ahead of the ripples.

Toward the cranny, Dr. Howard walks. Suddenly, he is back where he was, silently mouthing the words, "Visual echoes are pretty common. Move slowly-" Suddenly, the little fellow is beside the lank musician, helping her rise to her feet.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Brett. Get a wheelchair for Mrs. Smith.

Brett turns away and walks toward the two gray buildings on the far side of the chamber.

Gail is sitting again, and Dr. Howard is helping her to her feet. The unseen woman GROANS. Suddenly, she is teetering, held upright by the doctor.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The door opens, and the attendant pushes the seated woman into the beige room, followed by the doctor, who LAUGHS, CHOKES, SPITS his gum into his hand and LAUGHS anew.

DR. HOWARD
You're a treasure!

Gail rises from the wheelchair and walks to the bed. A moment after she sits on the mattress, she is in the wheelchair again, rising.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
See you tomorrow.

Suddenly, the woman is in bed, and Dr. Howard and Brett are leaving. The door shuts behind them and locks, CLACK.

Once the echo passes, Gail looks at the ground. The footprints that she saw earlier that morning have been cleaned from the rug.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The space is dark, excepting the lights embedded in the floor that lead from the bed to the bathroom door. Gail opens her eyes and sees the Tall Pale Man standing directly over her, holding a long steel rod in his right hand and a small white bottle in his left hand.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
She's awake.

GAIL
What the hell are you-

The visitor touches her forehead with his index finger, and she flinches in pain, YELPS and blacks out.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

Gail YELPS, startling herself awake. She sits up and looks around the darkened interior, unsure whether or not her memory was a dream or an actual event. After she inspects the floor for footprints, she rubs her forehead and lies back down upon the mattress, uneasy.

INT. DOME OF THE SCRIVENER / THE FACILITY - LATER

Sitting in the cranny, the lank musician looks at the little physician, who is nearby, wearing an olive tweed suit and flanked by the attendant.

DR. HOWARD
Third and final guidepost. Same as before, except The Scrivener will overstimulate your somatosensory cortex-- the part responsible-

GAIL
-for the sense of touch.

DR. HOWARD
Correct! You're a quick study. Brett's been down here a thousand times and still doesn't know anything.

BRETT
But I have feelings.

Dr. Howard LAUGHS.

DR. HOWARD
You don't!
(he looks at Gail)
Please lie down.

Gail lies down. A moment later, the gems in the cranny walls start to glow, and she shivers.

GAIL
It's cold.

DR. HOWARD
It'll just be a few seconds.

Her teeth CHATTER, and she trembles. Gouts of steam pours from her mouth, as if she has been thrust into the middle of winter. A moment later, her entire body flinches.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
It’s done.

The woman sits up, wobbles and grabs the sides of the cranny.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Wait for help-- this echo’s very, very tricky and affects your whole body.
(he walks toward Gail)
Pick up a glass of water, and a second later, your brain’s positive you’re not holding anything. The glass’ll end up on the floor or crushed to bits in your hand.

Brett pushes the wheelchair through the gap in the stanchions. Nearby, Dr. Howard helps Gail rise to her feet.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
The important thing is to move very, very slowly so you can avoid the overlapping touch sensations that’ll mix up your reflexes.

Presently, the little fellow seats the woman in the wheelchair as if she were a fragile one-hundred-year-old.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Hold on to the armrests. The more consistent the sensation, the better.

GAIL
Okay.

Brett rolls Gail forward, flanked by Dr. Howard. Presently, the lank musician looks over her shoulder, toward the gray buildings on the far side of the chamber.

GAIL (CONT'D)
What happens over there?

DR. HOWARD
I’ll show you tomorrow, after your first treatment.

Eyeing the mysterious edifices, the woman nods her head.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The woman slides the book entitled, ‘The Brain: What We Know About How We Think,” into her cubby, CLICKS off the overhead lights and lies down.

Dimly illuminated by the bulbs that are embedded in the floor, Gail watches the locked hallway door.

INT. BATHROOM / BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS - LATER

Within the mint green bathroom, Gail pulls a towel from her hidden dinner tray, dumps the food into the toilet and FLUSHES. Once the meal has been sucked into oblivion, she pours a carton of apple juice into the sink.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

Lying upon her side, the woman YAWNS, adjusts the pillow beneath her head and scratches her lower back. Her eyelids droop, heavy with fatigue, but she resists the urge to let them fall.

Outside the door sound quiet FOOTFALLS.

Gail prostrates herself, hiding her face behind her shoulder so that only a portion of her right eye is visible.

The door unlocks, and in walks the Tall Pale Man, wearing his gray smock. Light from the hall glints upon his bald, bumpy head. After quietly shutting the door, he appraises the patient, unable to see that she monitors him with her obscured, partly-closed right eye.

The visitor withdraws the small white bottle, places its nozzle into his left nostril, closes his eyes and squirts. Milky tears that sparkle weirdly track down the sides of his wrinkled face and clear fluid drips from his inner ears.

After wiping away the moisture and pocketing the sinus spray, the Tall Pale Man looks at the patient and raises his gaze to the area above her head. Fixated on that spot, he walks forward.

A yard from the mattress, the visitor stops and inspects the empty air five feet above Gail's head. He reaches his hand into the area, extends his fingertips and nods, pleased.

Presently, he retracts his arm and withdraws from the room, quietly shutting the door behind him.

The bolt locks, CLACK.

Unnerved by the experience, Gail spins onto her back and looks at the area overhead. Nothing but air and the ceiling lie above her.

GAIL
What the hell's going on?

The woman sits up and reaches a trembling hand into the scrutinized area. Her questing fingertips do not divine anything of substance.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The female Attendant leaves, shutting the door behind her. Abed, Gail looks at the partitioned breakfast tray, which has toast, scrambled eggs, grapefruit supremes, yogurt, juice and plastic utensils. She picks up a fork, hides it under the blanket, SNAPS off one of its tines and places the sharp object inside the breast pocket of her hospital shirt.

With her spoon, she eats eggs, glancing occasionally at the book nearby, which is open to a chapter entitled, 'Somatosensory Cortex: How The Brain Responds To Pain.'

INT. ELEVATOR / THE FACILITY - LATER

The elevator CHIRPS and closes. Standing beside Brett is Dr. Howard, dressed in a green plaid suit and looking at Gail, who wears new turquoise clothing and has her hair pulled back in a knot.

DR. HOWARD
Nervous?

GAIL
A little.

DR. HOWARD
Normal! Just follow my instructions.

The little physician smiles.

The woman shows some teeth.

INT. DOME OF THE SCRIVENER / THE FACILITY - MOMENTS LATER

Green dots shine upon the floor-, wall-, and ceiling-mounted cameras, which are now in use throughout the dome. Brett unhooks a security chain from the stanchions, and Dr. Howard leads Gail through the opening toward the cranny.

DR. HOWARD
The treatment's simple, but it involves a fair amount of concentration and repetition.

The woman and the little fellow stride up to the edge of the depression and pause.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
My wife says these make me look like a rock star.

The physician dons a pair of silver sunglasses and tilts his head back.

GAIL
Um.

The little fellow LAUGHS.

DR. HOWARD
Lie down like before.

Gail steps into the cranny, sits on the mattress and lies down. Light blossoms throughout the dome, a swirling oval-shaped whorl of white, yellow and blue electricity, flickering at impossibly fast speeds.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
That's your thinking.

For a moment, Gail observes the effulgent storm that is comprised of her thoughts. Her gaze focuses on the rear portion of the oval, which glows brighter and brighter...

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
That's visual feedback. The light in the map stimulates your eyes, your brain fires more neurons, that activity shows on the map, your eyes get more stimuli, your brain fires more neurons, again and again in a loop.

The rear of the oval continues to brighten.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Close your eyes when you see that happening or you'll get a headache.

Gail closes her eyes, and the map stabilizes.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Good. Now show The Scrivener what it needs to work on.

The woman glances at the little fellow.

GAIL
How?

DR. HOWARD
Concentrate. Think of the reasons why you don't like us-- visualize the events that brought you here. And when they're in your mind's eye, touch a gem on your right, keep it pressed and touch a gem on your left.

GAIL
Make a circuit?

DR. HOWARD
Make a circuit. The Scrivener will take an eleven-dimensional snapshot of what's happening in your brain at that moment.

GAIL
And rewrite it?

DR. HOWARD
It’s not that quick. The Scrivener stores multiple snapshots and compares them to make sure it’s revising the correct pattern.

GAIL
How many snapshots?

DR. HOWARD
Depends on how complicated the pattern is. In your case, how much you hate our guts!
(he LAUGHS)
Sometimes all it needs is thirty, though I’ve seen it require ten times as many when it’s rewriting deeply-rooted behavior like schizophrenia or pedophilia.

Gail rubs her face, secreting the fork tine in her mouth.

GAIL
Ready.

DR. HOWARD
Go ahead.

The woman fixes her resolve. Overhead, myriad webs of light swirl throughout the dome at the speed of thought.

Gail bites down on the fork tine and stabs her tongue. Pained, she touches her index fingers to the gems on either side of the cranny. Above her, the brilliant maelstrom dims.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
You just recorded an image.

Gail glances at her swirling thoughts.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Keep at it and try to be consistent. We’ll do twenty today if you’re up for it.

GAIL
I am.

Pressing her tongue to the sharp object, she makes a circuit with her fingertips. The swirling lights darkens for a split second. Again, she pokes herself and taps the gems. The lights dim and brighten.

DR. HOWARD
Don’t go too fast.

Swallowing blood, Gail shuts her eyes, lances her tongue and makes a circuit. The display darkens, and tears of pain drip down the sides of her face.

INT. DOME OF THE SCRIVENER / THE FACILITY - LATER

The dome overhead is unlighted, and the cameras are off. Beside the cranny, the doctor pockets his sunglasses and helps his unsteady patient rise to her feet. Nearby, the disinterested attendant YAWNS.

DR. HOWARD
How do you feel?

GAIL
I still want to see those-

Gail points at the pair of gray buildings that are nestled along the far wall.

DR. HOWARD
You're determined!
(he appraises her)
Do you want Brett to get a wheelchair? Your voice sounds a little slurred.

GAIL
I can walk.

After passing through the stanchions and circumventing the cranny, the lank musician and her doctor are joined by the strong bald fellow. Together, they walk across the purplish-black sponge toward the gray edifices.

GAIL (CONT'D)
What are those places?

Feet SQUISH the malleable ground. Dr. Howard withdraws a pack of red gum, and Gail discreetly wipes her mouth, palming and discarding the bloody fork tine.

DR. HOWARD
That's where the collators work.

GAIL
Are those people or machines?

DR. HOWARD
People. Thought analyzers.

The job description unsettles the woman's stomach, but she does not allow her concerns to show.

A moment after they pass by a video camera, the front door of the smaller edifice swings open. Gail's even strides falter, garnering looks from the attendant and the physician.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Are you-

GAIL
I’m fine.

Standing in the open doorway is the Tall Pale Man, wearing a gray smock and black boots. He raises his right hand and waves it at the approaching trio. Dr. Howard returns the salutation.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Who’s that?

DR. HOWARD
Mikkel Edvardsen.

Uneasy, Gail walks toward the spectral visitor who sneaked into her room on several occasions. The distance between her and the man is less than forty feet.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
He’s the only founding member who’s still active.

Edvardsen reenters the building, leaving the door open.

The woman shudders, staring at the dark portal.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
After you...

They reach the building, and the little physician gestures.

INT. GRAY BUILDING A / DOME OF THE SCRIVENER - SAME

The gray room into which Gail walks has two tinted picture windows, two hundred and seventy-five small television monitors and eight large high-definition screens. Sitting at the open control booth in the exact middle of the space is a COLLATOR, a petite white woman of thirty with short blond hair and a round freckled face.

COLLATOR
Good afternoon.

GAIL
Hi.

Edvardsen hangs his gray smock upon a wall that supports neatly-bound cables and a large framed photograph of himself, thirty years younger, wearing a wet suit and scuba gear, standing on a boat deck beside a bearded Indian, a white fellow and a black woman, all of whom are smiling.

DR. HOWARD
Let’s gander.

Dr. Howard escorts Gail to the central console and points an index finger at a blank screen, and the Collator RATTLES keys. After a glance at the inscrutable pale man, the lank musician returns her attention to the screen.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
This is a low-resolution preliminary composite of five of your snapshots.

Gail sees a glowing image that resembles a blurry egg.

The Collator adjusts three dials, and the luminous oval darkens, except for a narrow vertical swath in the top, near the middle.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
That's a rough sketch of your island.

GAIL
My island?

DR. HOWARD
The neural pathways you isolated for correction. It's a rough composite model made from the videos.

Suppressing her anxiety, Gail glances at Edvardsen. The tall pale man scrutinizes the image; his long face is distant and unreadable.

COLLATOR
Looks like her island's in the somatosensory cortex.

DR. HOWARD
It does.

Nervous, Gail reaches for a rail and stumbles, purposefully SMACKING her hand against the metal.

GAIL
Ow!

DR. HOWARD
You all right?

GAIL
Yeah.

DR. HOWARD
We should go. You need to rest.

GAIL
Yeah...you're right.

Rubbing her hand, the lank musician walks toward the door. As she passes the hanging photograph, she focuses on the black woman in it, who stands next to Edvardsen and seems somehow familiar.

Gail glances back at the tall pale man, whose gaze is still fixed on the monitor, and exits the facility.

INT. BATHROOM / BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS - LATER

The lank musician SPITS water into the sink, and little bits of flesh are escorted down the drain. Looking into the acrylic mirror, she opens her mouth and inspects her tongue, which is covered with dark red sores.

GAIL
New strategy.

After a moment of contemplation, the woman walks over to the door, opens it and rests her right pinky against the jamb. With her left hand, she grabs the knob.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Don’t think about it. Don’t think-

She shuts the door on her finger. GRUNTING, she stifles a yell. Sweat beads upon her pallid face.

After inspecting the red and trembling digit, she sets it against the jamb, grabs the knob, closes her eyes and flings the door. A bone CRACKS.

Overwhelmed by pain, Gail drops to her knees, scrambles to the toilet, hangs her head and RETCHES into the still water.

INT. SEAQUARIUM - DAY

Gail and Emmett stand in front of a thick glass tank inside of a seaquarium. Behind their spectral reflections swim several green moray eels whose black and yellow eyes glint with inscrutable thoughts.

GAIL
I wonder what they’re thinking about?

EMMETT
Maybe they’re wondering what we’re thinking about.

GAIL
I doubt it. That sort of projection seems specific to people.
(she watches an eel glide between coral rocks)
They’re probably thinking about something more useful than that.

EMMETT
Making love?

The woman turns from her husband's reflection to the actual man and shakes her head.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
(defensively)
What? They're swimming phallic symbols.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

The woman's right pinky is swollen and red. With the plastic fork in her good hand, she eats a steaming, protein-rich meal of fish, tofu and consomme.

INT. DOME OF THE SCRIVENER / THE FACILITY - LATER

Dr. Howard draws silver sunglasses from his blue plaid suit as Gail enters the cranny. The woman lies down, and the maelstrom of light fills the dome.

Utilizing the cerebral radiance, Brett reads from a book entitled, 'The Shooting Range."

DR. HOWARD
Same thing as yesterday.

A portion of the swirling brain map brightens with feedback, and the woman looks away, stabilizing the image.

GAIL
Will I feel it? When it rewrites me?

DR. HOWARD
Not much.

Gail jams her broken pinky against the mattress. Pain courses through her, and she touches a gem on each side of the cranny. Overhead, the luminous thought display dims.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Click-click.

The woman relaxes, suppressing her agony. A moment later, she clenches her right fist, and the broken pinky darkens. Trembling, she makes a circuit with her index fingers. The bright reflections in the doctor's sunglasses grow dim.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
The camera loves you.

Gail lowers her hands. Sweat glimmers upon her face, and she SMACKS her purplish-red pinky against the mattress. Agonized and grinding her teeth, she completes the circuit.

The storm of light vanishes, and the crimson gems within the cranny illuminate. Eyes wide open and mouth agape, Gail is paralyzed by The Scrivener.

Brett puts a bookmark in 'The Shooting Range.' Dr. Howard blows a large pink bubble. Beads of sweat trickle down the sides of the woman's face and DRIP onto the mattress. A moment after the saccharine sphere POPS, the bright gems inside the cranny shut off.

The maelstrom of cerebral lightning fills the dome. Flinching, Gail regains her senses.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Congratulations!

GAIL
That's it?

DR. HOWARD
That's it. You're quicker than most.

Gail sits up, and the dome darkens.

GAIL
I feel like garbage.

DR. HOWARD
You should eat a lot of protein and get as much sleep as you can.

Brett rolls the wheelchair between the stanchions, and Dr. Howard helps his patient rise to her feet.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
We'll start the tests tomorrow to verify that you did what we asked.

Queasy, the woman sits in the rolling seat.

GAIL
I did.

DR. HOWARD
Terrific.

Gail makes a fist with her right hand and KNOCKS her broken pinky against the wheelchair's armrest. The injury no longer causes her any pain. A tiny grin comes to her face.

GAIL
I can already feel a difference.

INT. BATHROOM / BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS - LATER

Sitting on the floor next to the toilet, Gail opens a book, finds a blank page, uncaps a marker and writes--

“My name is Gail.

I was abducted by the group that runs this facility and may be dead by the time you read this letter. I implore you to send an email that contains information about this organization to the following address-”

With tears in her eyes, she writes down Fichman’s anonymous email address and RIPS the paper loose.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - SAME

The bathroom door opens, and Gail emerges, carrying her book. She sets the tome inside her cubby and sits on the bed, her mind full of concerns.

After CLICKING off the lights, the woman withdraws the letter from her breast pocket, slides it into a slit in the side of the mattress and lies on her side, facing the hall door.

Her final wait begins.

INT. BEIGE ROOM WITHOUT WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - LATER

Excepting the lights in the floor, the room is dark. Abed, Gail watches the entrance, fear and fatigue at war within her. A thought occurs to her, and she glances at the air over her head, focusing on nothing, trying to see whatever there is to see. She reaches up.

An elevator CHIRPS, and she flinches.

The woman pulls a blanket over her head, leaving a small dark opening through which she may observe her visitor. A bolt CLACKS, and the door opens.

Standing in the portal is Edvardsen, wearing his gray smock and holding a black egg in his right hand. After a brief appraisal of the room, he enters and quietly closes the door.

The woman watches the pale visitor walk forward.

Five feet from the bed, Edvardsen stops, withdraws his sinus spray, inserts its nozzle into his nose and squirts.

Gail lunges.

A white triangle flashes on her neck. Unaffected by the pain stimulator, she SLAMS into the pale man and knocks him over.

Confused, the sprawled founder aims his weapon. A white triangle glares upon the woman’s palm to no avail. She grabs and twists his wrist, and the black egg falls to the floor.

Gail seizes the weapon; Edvardsen kicks her in the side, CRACKING a rib. An instant later, three colored triangles shine upon the man’s face.

GAIL
You’re getting me out of here.

Edvardsen shakes his head in refutation. Gail CLICKS the device. Triangles converges, and the pale man convulses.

Again, the woman points the black egg at the founder’s face.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Get up and take me t-

He lunges at her. Triangles converge. Edvardsen convulses, falls, SMACKS his head against the floor and passes out.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Shit.

Gail pockets the black egg, removes the founder’s necktie, rolls him onto his stomach, yanks his arms behind his back, ties his wrists together, pulls off his left shoe, claims the exposed sock and stuffs it into his mouth. For a moment, she looks at the man, thinking. Presently, she fetches hospital pants from her cubby and draws a leg over his head like a ski mask, securing the gag in place.

The woman rifles through her captive’s pockets, finds nothing, grabs his left ankle and drags him into the bathroom, which she exits and seals.

Pointing the black egg, Gail walks to the hall door, holds her breath and listens. She does not hear anything.

Carefully and quietly, the woman seizes the doorknob, twists and pulls. Light limns the jamb, and she peers through the opening. The hallway is unoccupied. She looks at the far wall and sees the black control panel that will not summon the elevator without a registered handprint and voice.

Gail closes the door, breathes, pockets the weapon and surveys the spot where Edvardsen fell.

Lying upon the stained rug is the sinus spray.

The woman seizes the bottle, picks it up and inserts its nozzle into her left nostril. Something that might be rational thought causes her to hesitate.

Staring at the space above her bed, Gail makes her decision. She squirts the mist into her nasal passage. Milky tears fill her eyes, and clear fluid drains from her ears. Chilled, she shudders.

Gail wipes away the moisture and surveys the area. Nothing is visible in the space above the bed.

Puzzled, she pockets the bottle and walks forward for a better look. Her close examination of the suspect region does not reveal anything.

Gail withdraws from the bed, and something big moves toward her. Startled, she turns.

Floating at head-level directly beside her is a large charcoal-gray cylinder that is eight feet tall and three feet in diameter.

Shocked, the lank musician stumbles back.

The cylinder floats toward her.

Gail points the black egg at her pursuer, but the targeting triangles shine upon the wall behind it. She throws a book, and the tome passes directly through the object and SMACKS against the wall.

Frightened and confused, Gail clambers across the bed.

The eight-foot-tall oblong follows after her.

Presently, she notices the three dangling wires that run from the bottom of the floating cylinder directly into her skull.

GAIL (CONT'D)
No.

Fear and revulsion fill the woman, and for the first time, a concern that she might truly be insane.

Gail tries to grab the wires, but her fingers pass through the ethereal matter. She backs away, and the lines snap taut, pulling the cylinder toward her.

GAIL (CONT'D)
No, no, no.

Outside the room, the elevator CHIRPS.

Distracted by a new fear, Gail gathers herself and walks toward the exit, trailing the cylinder. Presently, she puts her shoulder beside the jamb, twists the knob, cracks the door and peers outside.

The elevator opens. From the lift walk Brett, an ASIAN ATTENDANT and Dr. Howard. Each man holds a black egg and trails an eight foot tall cylinder that is connected to his head by three wires.

Shuddering, Gail closes the door.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.)
Mrs. Smith...Gail-- it's
Dr. Howard.

FOOTFALLS echo in the hall, slow and steady.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Sometimes the treatment can cause
hallucinations.
(MORE)

DR. HOWARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
If you come out and talk, I'm sure we can clear everything up. You just need to remain calm.

GAIL
What the hell are these things attached to our heads?

DR. HOWARD (O.S.)
Gail? Does that sound normal? What you just said?

FOOTFALLS grow louder.

Pulling her cylinder across the room, Gail hides behind the bed and points her black egg at the door.

The knob turns.

GAIL
Don't come in!

Three colored triangles shine upon the door at head level.

DR. HOWARD (O.S.)
Let's go to my office.

The Asian Attendant opens the door. Upon his face, the triangles converge and become white. He convulses, YELLS and falls to the ground, tugging his cylinder.

Brett fires a gun, BANG. The bullet grazes Gail's right shoulder, but does not cause her any pain.

Triangles converge upon the gunman's face, and YELLING, he SLAMS to the floor. His cylinder bounces off of its neighbor and disappears into the wall; wires snap taut, and the floating object returns.

Gail trains her weapon on Dr. Howard, who stands just outside the door, holding a black egg.

GAIL
Drop it.

The little physician releases his pain stimulator, and the woman strides across the room, trailing her cylinder.

INT. LONG BEIGE HALLWAY / THE FACILITY - SAME

With the black egg, Gail shoots each the fallen attendants so that they will remain unconscious. Dr. Howard watches, frightened and confused.

DR. HOWARD
More than two doses can do permanent damage.

The woman points her weapon at the little fellow.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
I only tried to help y-

GAIL
What are these things?-

Gail points at the eight foot tall cylinders that are tethered by three lines to her head, Dr. Howard's head and the heads of the fallen men.

DR. HOWARD
What things?

GAIL
The huge cylinders attached to our brains by wires-- three wires, which is how many of those goddamn guideposts you put in. What are they? Machines? Aliens? Whoever made The Scrivener?

DR. HOWARD
I- I don't have any idea what you're talking about. I just want to help you so you don't get reset.

The lank musician believes him.

GAIL
Fine. You're gonna get me out of-

The elevator CHIRPS.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Hands on your head.

Upon his receding hair, Dr. Howard rests his palms. Gail gets behind the physician and grabs his discarded weapon. A green light flashes, and the woman aims both black eggs at the elevator.

The door slides open, revealing Yalda and a male ATTENDANT. Red, green and blue triangles converge and flash bright white upon their faces before they have any time to react. The new arrivals THUD upon the floor, tugging their cylinders down from the ceiling.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Get in.

INT. ELEVATOR / THE FACILITY - SAME

Dr. Howard walks into the elevator, trailing his floating attachment and Gail, who doses Yalda and the Attendant and points an egg at the scanner.

GAIL
Get me out of here. The fastest way.

DR. HOWARD
Gail, please. Don't do this.
They'll be waiting for you and-

GAIL
I have a hostage.

Saddened, the little physician presses his palm to the panel.

DR. HOWARD
H two four. Garden Level.

After the green light flashes, the elevator CHIRPS, closes and RUMBLES. The lift rises, and the four cylinders sink from the ceiling through the floor.

The woman watches the tethers grow taut.

Dr. Howard grabs her wrists and shoves her backwards. Gail trips on Yalda's neck, looses her balance and BANGS her head.

The little man twists the woman's left arm, and a black egg falls. GRUNTING, he pins her right wrist to the wall.

Only inches separate the tips of their noses.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Calm down! I'm just trying to-

Gail SLAMS her face into the face of her enemy. Cheekbones slice cheeks, and cartilage SNAPS cartilage. The man YELLS, stumbles and falls.

The elevator rises. Blood dripping from her nostrils, Gail aims her remaining black egg. Dr. Howard glances at Yalda's weapon, which lies nearby. Red, green and blue triangles shine upon his face.

GAIL
Who's in the garden?

The little man lunges for the weapon. Upon his bare scalp, triangles converge and turn white. He YELLS, and his head SMACKS the floor.

DR. HOWARD
Trying...to save...

Dr. Howard looses consciousness, opens his mouth and drools.

GAIL
Crap.

Rising, the elevator shakes. Gail presses her hand to the black panel, and a red light flashes in the ceiling, accompanied by an unpleasant HONK.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Shit.

With Yalda's scarf, she ties off the shallow wound on her right shoulder. The lift RUMBLES.

Presently, the woman prostrates herself in-between her unconscious companions. As she claims the other black eggs, a crimson flower blossoms on Yalda's lapel, and Gail soon realizes that her bloody nose is the source of the floral decoration. A green light flashes.

Sprawled on her stomach, the lank musician aims two black eggs at the door. The walls shudder, and the elevator CHIRPS. Cylinders rise from the floor, pass through the bodies of the inhabitants and continue up until their tethers snap taut.

Opposite Gail, the metal door opens, revealing an armed GUARD who wears a reflective face mask and a rubberized bodysuit. Triangles converge, and the black eggs in the woman's hands BURST, sputtering sparks.

The insulated Guard aims his semiautomatic pistol.

GUARD
Out of the elevator.

Gail drops the smoking black eggs and shows her singed palms to her rubberized captor, who also has a floating gray cylinder attached to his head.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Come on.

GAIL
I'm coming.

Grimacing, the woman rises, wipes gore from her face and ambles forward.

INT. HALLWAY WITH WINDOWS / THE FACILITY - SAME

Gail enters a long hallway that has a door with a scanner at its far end and eight narrow frosted windows. After several clumsy steps, she falls and SLAMS against the tiled floor. The Guard flinches.

GUARD
Ouch. You okay?

The prostrated woman does not respond.

GUARD (CONT'D)
I'll shoot you if you're playing games.

Wary and pointing his gun, the rubberized fellow approaches Gail. He puts the toe of his right boot under her abdomen and rolls her onto her back, where she lies, inert and bloody, eyes closed. From his belt, he claims a pair of steel handcuffs.

Gail seizes his ankles and yanks them.

Off-balance, the man SMACKS the back of his head against the wall and THUDS upon the floor, where he SMACKS his head a second time. The woman claims the gun from his limp hand.

The elevator CHIRPS and starts to close.

Scrambling back, Gail trips and SLAMS onto the ground. The door nears the jamb. Sprawled, she reaches out.

Upon her right hand, the door closes. Something CRACKLES. A moment later, the door retracts, leaving behind a crooked and purple pinky finger.

Something SQUEAKS. Gail looks behind her and sees the rubberized Guard roll onto his stomach.

GAIL
Keep still or I'll shoot!

The insulated fellow rises to his knees, and the sprawled woman aims her semiautomatic gun.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Don't make me!

The elevator CHIRPS, and the door starts to close. As the Guard reaches for his belt, Gail fires, BANG. The bullet slams his right shoulder and knocks him over.

The woman thrusts her gun into the lift, and the automated door CLANKS against the barrel and reopens. Presently, she stands up, enters the elevator and drags Yalda partway into the hall. After another CHIRP, the door closes, bumps into the Pakistani woman's waist and retracts, unable to close.

Gail withdraws a black egg, walks over to the bleeding Guard and yanks off his reflective visor. The face revealed is that of Lyle Ferguson, the child molester.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Did it work?

Confused and in pain, the bug-eyed fellow stares up at the woman.

LYLE FERGUSON
What?

GAIL
The treatment? Did it work?

Lyle Ferguson nods his head, 'yes.'

GAIL (CONT'D)
So you'll never do that again?
With kids?

Colored triangles shine upon his trembling face.

LYLE FERGUSON
No. They fixed me.

Red, green and blue lights converge into a singular white entity. Lyle Ferguson convulses in pain and passes out.

A second after his body relaxes, the woman doses him again.

Something moves, startling Gail.

Drifting across the tiles is a gray disk that is three feet in diameter and ten inches tall. The woman recognizes the object as the top of a cylinder, the major part of which must be located on the floor directly below. Like a huge hockey puck, the object glides to the lone door at the far end of the hall and disappears on the far side.

FOOTFALLS resound inside of a stairwell.

A second cylinder top drifts through Lyle Ferguson's body, toward the closed portal, followed by a third and fourth disk. A moment after they disappear, multiple FOOTFALLS echo within the stairwell.

Apprehension fills Gail. She glances at the black panels that control both the door and the elevator--devices that she knows she cannot utilize--and looks at the frosted windows, which are not wide enough to admit her body.

GAIL
This is how it's gonna end?

Out in the stairwell, FOOTFALLS resound.

GAIL (CONT'D)
After all this?

Eyes shining with tears, the lank musician points her gun at the door. Gradually, her despair turns into anger.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Goddamn you people.
(calling out)
I just wanna go home!

She brushes tears from her face and steadies her weapon.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Can I help?

Gail turns around. From the elevator ambles Dr. Howard, bruised, bloody and shaking.

DR. HOWARD
Been told I make a pretty good hostage.

Tears of gratitude shine in the woman's eyes as the little fellow approaches her, chewing gum, palms in the air.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
I'm not such a great actor, so if you need to hurt me to make it look convincing-
(he shrugs)
I've got good health coverage.

He blows a bubble flecked with blood, and it POPS.

GAIL
Thank you so-

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Gail Smith! Drop your weapons!

Gail gets behind her gum-chewing captive.

GAIL
I have a hostage!

DR. HOWARD
It's me! Clarence Howard!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Dr. Howard?

DR. HOWARD
Yeah!

GAIL
Go back down or I'll kill him!

There is no reply from the other side of the door. Gail points the gun at the ground and squeezes the trigger, BANG.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Now!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Don't shoot. We'll go down.

FOOTFALLS resound inside the stairwell.

A cylinder top rises ten inches from the tiles and slides through Dr. Howard's loafers, Gail's slippers and Lyle Ferguson's head. A moment later, a second disk travels the hall and joins the first, which hovers directly in front of the elevator.

GAIL
All of you!

Inside the stairwell, somebody MURMURS. Presently, the third and forth cylinder tops rise from the tiles and congregate with their circular associates.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Are we almost outside?

DR. HOWARD
One more room.

GAIL
Good.

Trailing their cylinders, the duo walks to the door. Dr. Howard SLAPS his palm against the scanner, and a red light flashes, accompanied by an unpleasant HONK.

A pang of fear lances Gail.

DR. HOWARD
Stupid of me.

The little fellow wipes his bloody handprint from the black panel, rubs his right palm on his pants and presses clean skin to the glass.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
H two four.

A green light flashes. The door CHIRPS, CLICKS and opens.

INT. RECEPTION AREA / THE FACILITY - SAME

Wary, Gail follows Dr. Howard into a carpeted room that has striped teal-and-mocha wallpaper, a trio of standing lamps, six frosted skylights, a large reception desk and three couches. Floating above the farthest sofa are two eight-foot tall cylinders.

GAIL
Get up from behind the couch!
Slow, with your hands in the air!

The gray oblongs draw together. Unable to see the cylinders, Dr. Howard glances at Gail, concerned that she is having a psychotic episode.

DR. HOWARD
(whispered)
Are you sure?

GAIL
Come out or I'll execute him!

The cylinders bounce off of each other, but do not rise. Gail fires, BANG. A frosted skylight SHATTERS, revealing gray clouds.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Okay, okay!

GAIL
I want to see four empty hands.

Like shark fins, four splayed palms rise above the back of the far sofa, followed by the apprehensive heads of two ATTENDANTS-- a Hispanic woman and an Indian man.

HISPANIC ATTENDANT
Don't shoot us, pl-

GAIL
Go downstairs.

Without delay, the pair hastens toward the stairwell and down the steps. FOOTFALLS echo.

Perplexed by what he just witnessed, Dr. Howard walks toward the front door, followed by his cylinder and Gail.

DR. HOWARD
Did The Scrivener give you x-ray vision?

GAIL
If you want to see what's really going on-

Gail withdraws the sinus spray from her breast pocket.

Curious and apprehensive, Dr. Howard considers the little white bottle. After a few strides, he shakes his head.

DR. HOWARD
I don't need to know everything.

The woman pockets the sinus spray and withdraws a black egg so that she has a weapon in each hand. At the main entrance, the physician presses his right palm to the scanner.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
H two four.

A green light flashes. The door CHIRPS, CLICKS and opens.

EXT. TOPIARY GARDEN / THE FACILITY - SAME

Trailing their cylinders and squinting, Dr. Howard and Gail walk out of the in-patient building into a wide, oval-shaped garden that has a bubbling fountain, nine wooden benches and an overabundance of high topiary. The pale light near the hem of the cloudy vault shows that it is early morning.

After closing the door, the woman points her gun at the security panel and fires, BANG. Black glass SHATTERS, and a red light blinks-- the scanner is disabled. Presently, the physician points an index finger at the steps on the far side of the garden.

DR. HOWARD
The helipad's over there.

GAIL
Helipad? How about a car or a truck?

Dr. Howard LAUGHS.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Do you know how to fly a helicopter?

The little fellow LAUGHS.

DR. HOWARD
We'll try to get a real pilot.

Following Dr. Howard, Gail surveys the verdant region, unable to see beyond the high topiary. Amongst the groomed bushes, she notes several that are eight feet tall and cylindrical.

GAIL
The gardener's got a sense of humor.

Walking, the lank woman glances over her shoulder toward the in-patient building. The door is still closed.

Something flashes overhead, and she looks up.

Her stomach twists. Floating in the cloudy sky is a charcoal-gray sphere that is three feet in diameter.

Frightened, Gail points her gun at object.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Do you see that?

Dr. Howard looks at the sky.

DR. HOWARD
Sure. Though I'd heard it was gonna rain.

Overhead, the charcoal-gray sphere hovers.

GAIL
Not the sky, the-

The sphere speeds directly at Gail, and she fires her gun, BANG, BANG. Unaffected, the object sweeps through her chest and into her cylinder.

GAIL (CONT'D)
No!

Confused, the little fellow puts a hand on the woman's shoulder and squeezes, affectionately.

DR. HOWARD
Let's keep going.

Shocked, Gail continues forward, numbly following Dr. Howard across the garden.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
You okay?

GAIL
Some...some kind of- of flying ball just entered my cylinder.

DR. HOWARD
The-
(he thinks)
-the one attached to your brain?

GAIL
Yes.

DR. HOWARD
What's it doing now?

Walking, the lank musician glances at her cylinder and the three lines that connect it to her head.

GAIL
I don't know.

DR. HOWARD
You feel any different since it went inside?

GAIL
I don't think so.

DR. HOWARD
Maybe it's just looking for snacks.

As they near at the stairs, Gail looks behind her. Another charcoal-gray sphere drops from the sky, and she freezes. Presently, the ball sweeps through her head and enters Dr. Howard's cylinder.

GAIL
Did you feel that?

DR. HOWARD
I can't feel anything right now but my face.

Grinning, the physician motions to his battered visage.

GAIL
Sorry.

DR. HOWARD
If I wasn't married, I might've appreciated the onslaught.

Up the stone steps toward the gate, they climb. The woman glances over her shoulder and sees nothing abnormal, excepting her cylinder.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
You had The Scrivener rewrite your ability to feel physical pain?

GAIL
Yes.

DR. HOWARD
That's a dangerous condition to live with. You need to be careful.

GAIL
I'll worry about the future in the future.

Dr. Howard LAUGHS as he reaches the top step, and Gail CLICKS the gun's safety from red to green.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Green means the safety's on?

DR. HOWARD
For reasons unknown, green means "stop" in gun language.

The little fellow opens the gate, and a chill wind WHISTLES.

Teeth CHATTERING, the woman presses her pistol into her captive's back and aims the black egg over his left shoulder.

EXT. HELIPAD / THE FACILITY - SAME

Together, Gail and Dr. Howard enter a circular helipad that has mint-green asphalt, high walls and two yellow, seven-seat helicopters. On the far side of the paved area sits a brown building from which emerges a white SENTRY in a dark blue suit, trailing a cylinder and holding a thermos. He freezes when he sees the bloody faces of the new arrivals.

GAIL
Stand still or-

The Sentry reaches into his pocket. Red, green and blue triangles converge upon his neck. His forehead SMACKS the asphalt, and the thermos CLANKS and rolls, trailing coffee. A sphere emerges from his cylinder and corkscrews into the sky.

DR. HOWARD
Hope he didn't get a concussion.

Gail turns around, surveys the topiary garden, sees that it is empty and closes the gate. Overhead, the sphere that left the Sentry's cylinder reverses direction.

DR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Gail!

A GUNSHOT rings out. The little fellow SLAMS into the lank woman, knocking her flat on the ground. Her black egg bounces through the gate, down the stone steps and into the garden. GASPING for air, she looks over her shoulder.

Dr. Howard drops to his knees, clutching his red stomach.

Gail is horrified.

GAIL
God.

Sixty feet away, the prone Sentry aims, his vision blurred by the blood in his eyes.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Stop, stop! I'll give up! I'll-

The muzzle flashes. A bullet whistles past the physician, over the woman's head and CLANKS against the iron gate.

Gail points her semiautomatic.

Dr. Howard raises his hands in the air.

DR. HOWARD
Stop! Everybody just calm-

The prone man fires, BANG, BANG, BANG. A bullet whistles through cylindrical topiary, and the other two rounds CRACK Dr. Howard's sternum and right cheekbone.

GAIL
No!

Leaves fall, and so does the little physician.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Goddamn you!

Gail pulls the locked trigger, CLICKS the safety off and fires, BANG, BANG, BANG. Asphalt CRACKS, dusting the Sentry's face, and a bullet lances his right shoulder.

A light flashes in the brown building. Triangles converge upon the prone man's back, and he convulses, GRUNTS and looses consciousness.

AMPLIFIED MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Gail. Do not shoot-- I'm coming out of the building.

A sphere corkscrews from the Sentry's cylinder into the sky.

GAIL
Have your hands up!

From the portal strides Bertrand, bald and wearing a tan suit, hands raised. Unlike everybody else Gail has seen since she used the sinus spray, he does not have a cylinder tethered to his head.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Dr. Howard needs medical attention.

A sphere twists in front of her face, flicks and into the sky.

BERTRAND
He doesn't.

Gail glances at Dr. Howard, who stares up at the clouds with dilated, unblinking eyes. Blood drains from his chest, his open mouth and the hole in his right cheek.

Tears pours from the lank musician's eyes.

Presently, she kneels beside the little physician and shakes his shoulders.

GAIL
Dr. Howard.

Bertrand watches the duo, his palms up and out like a pair of floating starfish.

BERTRAND
We need to leave right now.

Filled with guilt, Gail leans over and kisses Dr. Howard's cool forehead.

GAIL
I'm so sorry.

The woman rises to her feet, wipes her eyes and points her gun at the recruiter.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Get me a pilot.

BERTRAND
I'm going to fly you out of here myself.

Pistol forward, Gail approaches Bertrand and extends her free hand.

GAIL
Give me that egg.

The fellow places the black egg in her upturned palm and steps back. With the tip of her semiautomatic, the woman points at each of the helicopters.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Do either of them have a manual?

For a moment, Bertrand is confused by the request.

BERTRAND
An instruction manual?

GAIL
Yes.

BERTRAND
No.

The woman points her gun at the nearer rotorcraft, which is thirty feet away.

GAIL
Get in.

Bertrand walks toward the chosen vehicle, keys glinting in his left hand, his dress shoes CLACKING upon the asphalt.

As Gail follows, she looks over her shoulder at Dr. Howard's lifeless body. Ethereal tethers withdraw from his head, and his charcoal-gray cylinder drifts into the sky like a hot air balloon that has lost its basket.

INT. YELLOW HELICOPTER 2 - SAME

Bertrand opens the helicopter's front right door and sits in the pilot's seat. Behind him, Gail enters the cabin and slides across the cushioned front bench, pointing her gun. The tops of the wires that protrude from her head disappear inside the ceiling, and her cylinder floats somewhere outside, in-between the rotors.

GAIL
Shut the door.

The fellow closes the door and waves through the acrylic windshield. Standing in front of the brown building and returning the farewell is his twin brother, the man whom Gail saw at The Catch.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Go up.

Bertrand turns his key, CLICKS the ignition, reaches for the collective (the bar beside his seat), clasps its top grip and twists. Overhead, the rotor blades start to spin, WHUP, WHUP, WHUP. The cabin shakes.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Twisting that thing controls how fast the blades turn?

Nodding his head, the recruiter raises the lever. Rotors ROAR, and the helicopter lurches into the air, rising. Gail's cylinder drops from the ceiling, sinks through the cabin and passes through the floor. The wires snap taut behind her skull.

She looks through the windshield. Beyond the brown building, lies a swath of rippling aquamarine water.

Bertrand twists the grip, hastening the helicopter's climb, and through the side windows, Gail sees the in-patient facility, five other buildings and the vast body of water that surrounds everything.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Are we in the Pacific?

The recruiter does not respond to her inquiry.

ROARING, the rotorcraft ascends.

Gail looks down. Below the helicopter lies the rectangular rigging platform that supports the helipad, the topiary garden and the six buildings.

Bertrand TAPS a pedal; empty gray sky and aquamarine water scroll across the windshield.

GAIL (CONT'D)
The pedals steer?

BERTRAND
They manage torque with the tail rotor. The cyclic is the simplest way to steer-

Gripping the cyclic (a jutting joystick), the recruiter pushes to the left, which causes the helicopter to lean and fly in that direction. Gail nods and glances at the rigging platform, which is now more than eight hundred feet below and behind the tail of the vehicle.

GAIL
Take me to a public place.

BERTRAND
I will.

The lank musician rests the gun on her left thigh, but keeps it pointed at the recruiter.

GAIL
What's going to happen to Dr. Howard's family?

BERTRAND
We'll take care of them.

Sadness burgeons inside of Gail, and for a moment, she is unable to speak. After wiping her eyes, she nods her head.

GAIL
Good.

BERTRAND
You don’t need to point that gun any longer.

The woman scrutinizes the recruiter, whose bald head lacks protruding wires.

GAIL
You didn’t get the treatment.

BERTRAND
I didn’t.

GAIL
Because you’re afraid of the cylinders?

BERTRAND
Because I did not need treatment. The cylinders are harmless.

GAIL
But they’re machines--alien machines probably--and you’re attaching them to our brains--to our senses--so that they--whatever “They” are--can see what we see and hear what we hear and feel and what we feel.
(shaking with anger)
And you do this under the pretense of repairing people. Sick people, damaged people-- people who already have problems!

BERTRAND
It is not a “pretense.” The treatment repairs damaged minds.

GAIL
The treatment is a trick to get people into The Scrivener! So you can attach this stuff-

Angry, Gail swats at the trio of lines that are attached to her brain.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Do you even know why? Why these things want to monitor us? What they intend to do?

BERTRAND
Gail. What obvious conclusion can you draw about a life form that has the ability to make The Scrivener?

The recruiter toggles the cyclic, and the woman ruminates.

GAIL
It’s a lot smarter than we are.

BERTRAND
Yes-- and that is a magnificent understatement. The combined intelligence of the human race is closer to a worker ant than it is to whatever built The Scrivener.
(he TAPS a pedal)
Although our popular culture tells us that aliens will be our enemies, it is naive to think that beings who are intellectually superior will be morally inferior and desperate for our limited resources.
(he TAPS a pedal)
And the idea that humanity will be condemned by aliens as a cosmic threat is a silly, self-loathing contrivance that mirrors why people invented god.

Bertrand nudges the cyclic, and the horizon tilts.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
If the Builders wanted to kill or enslave mankind, they could do so in a matter of seconds, and we could not stop them. Instead, they have given us a machine that heals people and creates windows into our reality. What happens at the facility isn't a "trick," it's a trade.

Pensive, Gail looks through the window.

GAIL
Are the Builders those spheres that fly in and out of the cylinders?

BERTRAND
I doubt it.

GAIL
So those things...what?...collect data for the Builders?

BERTRAND
Maybe. The sinus spray was invented--reverse engineered--quite recently, so most of what's happening is still a mystery to us.

GAIL
So you've never seen one of the Builders?

BERTRAND
Nobody has.

The woman remembers something.

GAIL
I saw a picture of Edvardsen--when he was young--on a boat with a woman who looked like you. Was your mother was one of the founders?

Managing torque with the pedals, Bertrand looks over his shoulder, directly at his passenger.

BERTRAND
What are your intentions?

Gail shakes her head.

GAIL
I don't know.

Ruminating, she glances at the gun in her lap.

BERTRAND
You are the last person whom we will ever attempt to convert. If more people come looking for us, we will reset them.

The woman is not surprised by the proclamation. Outside, the speck that was the facility disappears from view.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
I am releasing you. After I drop you off, I shall to return to the facility and inform Mrs. Howard that she is a widow and a single mother.
(quietly)
Please let all of this end today.

GAIL
Shouldn't you share this technology with the world, rather than keep it secret?

BERTRAND
The Builders and the people to whom The Scrivener was first revealed should make that determination, not you or I.

Gail surveys the vast and secretive ocean that lies beneath the gray vault, calm and inscrutable. Exhaling, the bloody and exhausted woman looks at the gun in her lap and CLICKS its safety from red to green.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
Thank you.

GAIL
You certainly aren't my enemy.

BERTRAND
None of us are.

The woman neither refutes nor accepts his proclamation. Presently, she locates a water bottle, drinks from it, moistens the hem of her shirt and wipes blood from her face.

The recruiter TAPS a pedal, and the ROARING vehicle shifts.

Gail leans back and looks through the windshield. Exhaustion catches up with her, and her eyelids start to grow heavy.

INT. BEDROOM / THE LINDER HOUSE - NIGHT

Emmett, dressed in jeans and boxer shorts, puts expensive black clothing into a suitcase that lies upon the king-sized bed, directly beside Gail, who wears a green robe and sits Indian-style in front of her laptop computer.

EMMETT
I'll make it up to you--repeatedly in ten directions--when I get back from Seattle.

GAIL
That's the only reason I let you go on trips.

A thought occurs to Emmett, and he pauses, considering whether or not to verbalize it.

GAIL (CONT'D)
What?

EMMETT
Have you thought about...what we talked about last week?

GAIL
I have.
(she looks down)
I just...I don't know if I'm ready yet.

EMMETT
It's been three years.

GAIL
It's been two years, eleven months and five days. But we still don't know why it happened.

EMMETT
We're not going to know. That's what S.I.D.S. is. Doctors saying, "we don't know what happened to these babies."

GAIL
But I need an answer. So I'll know I did absolutely everything I could for her.

Emmett walks over to his wife and sits upon the edge of the bed. A bittersweet smile shines upon his face.

EMMETT
Gail.

The woman looks into her husband's sparkling blue eyes.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
You did everything you could for her. More than everything.

Emmett touches her cheek and kisses her on the mouth.

INT. YELLOW HELICOPTER 2 - LATE MORNING

Gail awakens, seated on the helicopter bench. Ahead of her, Bertrand toggles the cyclic and TAPS a pedal.

GAIL
Bertrand.

BERTRAND
Yes?

GAIL
Is there any way you can repair my husband? Give him back his memories?

The recruiter shakes his head.

BERTRAND
No. The process is irreversible.

Gail is not surprised by his answer.

BERTRAND (CONT'D)
He can develop into a fully-functioning adult, but his past is gone forever.

Sad and accepting, the woman nods her head and looks through the window.

GAIL
That's what I thought.

Outside the ROARING helicopter and above the clouds is a small pale disk that is the sun.

GAIL (CONT'D)
I just needed to be sure.

INT. YELLOW HELICOPTER 2 - LATE MORNING

The rotorcraft tilts forward. On the far horizon, Gail sees five twisting black dots, which are distant spheres. After a moment of consideration, she looks at the recruiter.

GAIL
Do you know how the cylinders and spheres can pass through everything? Are they made up of dark matter or--what're those called--quarks?

BERTRAND
I think that they exist in eleven-dimensional spacetime and can navigate our small reality by using those other dimensions. What you see when you use the sinus spray is only a shadow of what they really look like.

The flying dots vanish in the clouds, and the woman glances at the spray bottle in her breast pocket.

GAIL
This stuff wears off, right?

BERTRAND
It lasts about six hours the first time you use it.

GAIL
How does it work?

Toggling the cyclic, Bertrand glances at his passenger.

BERTRAND
I don't think you want to know.

GAIL
Tell me.

BERTRAND
The fluid extends part of your brain into another dimension.

Gail stares at the recruiter.

GAIL
You're joking.

BERTRAND
I'm not.
(he TAPS a pedal)
But it all snaps back into place.

Rubbing her temples, she shakes her head.

GAIL
They should really put that on the bottle.

INT. YELLOW HELICOPTER 2 - NOON

The sun is above the dome of gray clouds, a pale blur. Seated upon the bench, Gail watches her trailing wires, which flicker between solid and translucent states.

GAIL
I think it’s starting to wear off.

Looking through the side window, she surveys the topography. Something startles her.

Floating below the surface of the ocean is an enormous charcoal-gray, kidney-shaped creature that has eighteen tails, each of which is more than a mile long.

GAIL (CONT'D)
I see something really big. In the water.

Outside, the enormous kidney-shaped creature flickers between solid and translucent states, synchronized with Gail’s wires.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Do you know what it is?

BERTRAND
I don’t, though I know that several people have seen strange things out here.

The creature pivots impossibly, stretching left and right while expanding, and disappears into the dark depths, trailing its mile-long tails. It is followed by a score of ovals that are covered with long sharp quills.

GAIL
It’s gone.

Gail leans back on the bench, looks through the windshield and GASPS. Directly in front of the helicopter is the huge kidney-shaped creature.

GAIL (CONT'D)
It’s in front of us.

Again, the cyclopean entity pivots impossibly, as if stretching left and right, and disappears, trailed by its mile-long tails and the group of quill-covered ovals, which flicker in time with the lank musician’s wires.

Gail sits back in her seat and rubs her eyes, shaken by her glimpses of the strange beings.

INT. YELLOW HELICOPTER 2 - LATE DAY

Yellow light streams through the side windows of the rotorcraft. Gail drinks water, sets the empty bottle down and looks back. The wires that trail from her head are no longer visible.

GAIL
My brain's back.

BERTRAND
Good.

Bertrand nudges the cyclic, and the front of the rotorcraft tilts down, revealing turquoise water and a white swath.

GAIL
That doesn't look like Seattle.

EXT. WHITE SAND BEACH - LATE DAY

The ROARING helicopter descends, disturbing the ocean and a score of palm trees, garnering the attentions of unhappy SUNBATHERS who lie upon a white beach in brightly-colored swimsuits, shielding themselves from airborne sand. A FAT MAN in tiny swim trunks rises, puts cupped hands beside his mouth and fills his lungs with air.

FAT MAN
¡Oye! ¡Vas a otra playa!

Descending, the yellow rotorcraft approaches its dragonfly shadow on the white shoal. Something CLICKS, and the passenger door opens. Within the vehicle, Bertrand hands Gail several folded bills, which she accepts.

FAT MAN (CONT'D)
¡Puta!

Four feet remain between the helicopter skids and the wet sand. Gail turns to the door and jumps. Her slippers SMACK the shoal, and a ROARING wave soaks her hospital pants.

Bertrand toggles the cyclic. The helicopter tilts to the right, and the open door SLAMS shut. Presently, the vehicle veers into the sky and departs.

Observed by every single Sunbather, the lank white woman in bloodstained hospital clothes walks out of the water, unfolds the money given to her by the recruiter and sees that she posses ten one-hundred-dollar bills.

FAT MAN (CONT'D)
¡Puta loca!

GAIL
Hey! I know those words.

Several people LAUGH. After a few more strides, Gail makes eye contact with a MEXICAN WOMAN who sits on a blanket beside two young GIRLS.

GAIL (CONT'D)
¿Perdon?

MEXICAN WOMAN
Yes?

GAIL
May I use your cellphone?

The mother looks at the big bills in the lank gringa's hand.

MEXICAN WOMAN
Two hundred dollars?

Titlecard: Portland. Two days later...

INT. GATE 12C / PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NOON

Dressed in a brown corduroy suit and standing at a sunlit airport gate is Fichman, his long, silver-black hair tied back in a ponytail. Anxious, the tall fellow rubs his short beard as he watches suntanned PASSENGERS disembark from the plane. A pale and bruised anomaly who has sunglasses, a crooked nose, a black t-shirt, a bandaged right hand, blue jeans and sneakers strides through the portal.

INT. ROOM 319 / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - LATER

Escorted by Dr. Tsang, Gail walks into hospital room 319. Dressed in white hospital clothes and sitting on the bed, Emmett watches the duck pond.

DR. TSANG
Emmett.

The patient looks at the neurologist.

GAIL
He learned his name.

DR. TSANG
His sister taught him. He knows a couple of other words too.
(to Emmett)
A woman's here to see you.

Emmett stares, blank and oblivious.

Sad yet accepting, Gail approaches the reset man and hugs him as if he were a child.

INT. WAITING AREA / THIRD FLOOR / BRADLEY HOSPITAL - LATER

Seated on a couch in the waiting area, Fichman hands the lank woman a handkerchief, which she uses to wipe her eyes.

FICHMAN
Are you going to tell Chatterjee and the I.R.S. about all this?

GAIL
I don't think so. I got my answers.
(she balls up the cloth)
Going after them won't change what happened to Emmett or to Dr. Howard, and I think it'll do more harm than good.
(quietly)
It already has.
(she clears her throat)
I think it's time to let go.

The bearded fellow nods his head in agreement.

FICHMAN
There's a big difference between giving up and letting go.

Gail takes Fichman's hand and squeezes it tightly.

GAIL
Thanks for saying that.

Two years later...

INT. ROOM 212 / SPECIAL EDUCATION CENTER - AFTERNOON

Tan, healthy and carrying big shopping bags, Gail, dressed in green, walks into a yellow classroom that has assorted drawings affixed to the wall, a chalkboard and ten chairs. Seated together at a large desk are Emmett and a freckled TEACHER who is fifteen years younger than her pupil. The infantilized man sees his visitor, brightens and rises from his chair.

EMMETT
Aunt Gail!

Smiling bittersweetly, the musician approaches the cheerful blonde fellow.

INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT

Dressed in black and playing their stringed instruments upon a concert hall stage are Gail, Fichman and two ASIAN MUSICIANS.

The quartet is watched by an AUDIENCE of three hundred well-dressed people. Enthralled by the invisible spell of harmony and melody, each listener goes on a unique mental journey.

Gail Linder draws her bow across taut violin strings and looks at the spectators.

Her eyes flicker to the empty space above their heads, and she wonders...

Cut to black.

The End.